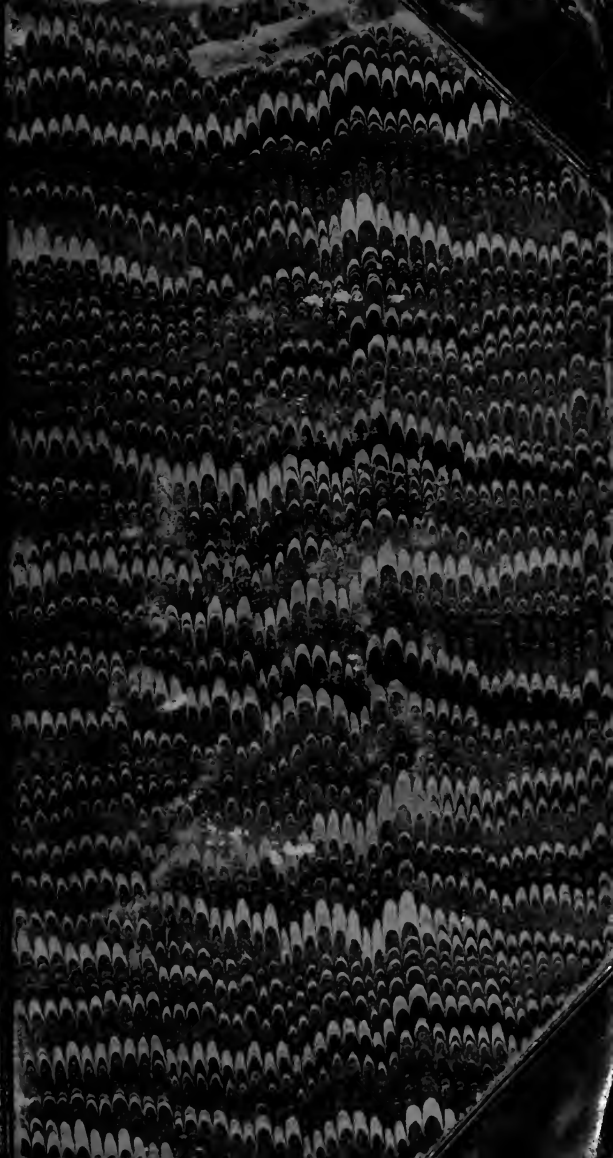


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Sir Henry P. de Bathe Bart.



MEMOIRS
OF
THE LATE WAR.
VOL. II.

The United Service Journal

AND

NAVAL AND MILITARY MAGAZINE.

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LONDON.

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE LATE WAR:

COMPRISING

THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF

CAPTAIN COOKE,

OF THE 43RD REGIMENT LIGHT INFANTRY;

THE HISTORY OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1809

IN PORTUGAL,

BY THE EARL OF MUNSTER;

AND A NARRATIVE OF

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814 IN HOLLAND,

BY LIEUT. T. W. D. MOODIE, H. P. 21ST FUSILEERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

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MEMOIRS

OF

CAPTAIN COOKE.

CHAPTER I.

Dwellings and habits of the farming classes in Navarre—Military quarters—The Author obtains leave to proceed to St. Sebastian as a spectator of the assault—Situation of that city, and appearance of the breaches—Groups collected from the neighbouring parts to witness the storming—Advance of the “forlorn hope,” and death of Lieut. Mac Guire—Critical situation of the attacking troops—Seasonable measure adopted by General Graham—Effect produced by the heavy artillery—Destructive explosion among the French—Capture of the city after continued difficulties.

IN Navarre the *quintas* are constructed with projecting roofs, and are two stories high: the second floors are encircled by wooden galleries, adorned with creeping vines, hanging over in fes-

toons, which give these dwellings a most picturesque appearance. The numerous fertile valleys produce wheat, rye, barley, maize, pulse, and apples which make very tolerable cider.

When on picquet, we passed whole days in the houses of the small farmers, (who speak the Basque language;) and although these dwellings lay between the hostile armies, they were not damaged, nor the corn or orchards cut down; yet, for leagues in every other direction, all the small fields of Indian corn had been torn up by the very roots, and carried off.

Owing to this latter circumstance, many of the peasantry became impoverished, and were obliged to content themselves with very scanty fare; their bread was made of Indian corn, which they mixed up into a cake, an inch thick, and then put it into a frying pan, which was repeatedly turned, until its contents were about half baked; this operation being completed, the whole family formed a circle; the cake was then broken into pieces, and handed to each individual, so hot that they would shift it from hand to hand, making all sorts of wry faces; this frugal supper being concluded, a large brass cauldron was filled with tepid water, in which the elder of the family first bathed his feet, and then the others, according to seniority, until all, in rotation, performed the

same cleanly ablution, which was never omitted before retiring to rest.

While on the position of Santa Barbara, or whenever in the vicinity of the enemy, it was customary to turn out an hour before daybreak, and for the troops to stand to their arms until objects at a short distance became visible. On these mountains we were terribly annoyed by the toads. Many officers possessed mattresses or covers, (the latter being usually stuffed with dried fern,) but if they happened to be left in the tent two or three days without removing, or taken out to dry, which was often the case, owing to heavy rains or dense fogs, we were sure to find one or two bloated speckled toads under them, as large in circumference as a small dessert plate.

Towards the end of the month, we could distinctly hear the heavy thundering of the battery cannon at St. Sebastian, and an order was issued for the first, fourth, and light divisions to send a certain number of volunteers, to assist the fifth division in storming the breaches at that place, as soon as they should be considered practicable.

By some mistake, we were informed that two officers were to proceed from our regiment with the volunteers; accordingly Lieut. John O'Connell and myself offered our services, and marched off and formed with the rest of the volunteers of the

division, in front of General Alten's quarters, which was about a league in rear of our encampment; but as more officers had proffered their services than the proper quota, I, amongst the rest, made a surplus, and Lieut. O'Connell, being my senior, remained. This officer had formed one of the storming party at Ciudad Rodrigo, and at Badajoz, where he was badly wounded, a ball having passed in at the top of his shoulder and came out at the elbow joint: he was ultimately killed on the sanguinary breach of St. Sebastian. Lieut.-Col. Hunt, of the 52nd, took the command of the volunteers of the division. Major W. Napier had also volunteered, but not being required on this occasion, both he and myself returned to camp.

On the following day, myself and three other officers obtained permission to proceed across the mountain to be *spectators* of the assault. The weather was extremely fine, and we enjoyed a tranquil ride over the mountains, many of which were entirely covered with oak trees, aromatic plants, fern, and evergreens. For more than two leagues there was scarcely a house to be seen. The day being far advanced before we left our camp, darkness overtook us, and, on making enquiries at a cottage, we were informed, by a peasant, that there was an encampment at a short distance, which we soon

discovered to the right of the road, and found it to be the 85th light infantry, just arrived from England. We received a hearty welcome, besides *aguardiente y vino tinto*, and then wrapping our cloaks around about us, we enjoyed a few hours repose in Major Ferguson's tent.

At daybreak we went on our way through an open, hilly, and sandy country, towards St. Sebastian, and in a few hours took post in the trenches cut through the sand banks, on the right bank of the river Urumea, and within six hundred yards of the town, which stands near the river, or rather on a small peninsula, between two arms of the sea. The place consisted of twenty streets, besides churches, convents, and monasteries; and is enclosed on three sides by ramparts, bastions, and half-moons. The castle is built on the top of a bare rock, and overlooking the sea; the entrance of the harbour, on the west side, is between two moles, and is capable of containing a few small vessels.

During our stay in the trenches, just below a mortar battery, the enemy hardly fired a shot from the fortress, in the walls of which were two breaches eighty yards asunder. The principal and wide-mouthed breach had crumbled into a vast mound of sand, rubbish, and broken masonry. A breach is indeed an awful mound of

dilapidation to look on, or rather a heap of disagreeable rubbish, particles of which sparkle brightly in the sun beams, while the whole seems to the amateur easy of ascent, but the wary veteran knows it to be a deceitful slope, re-entrenched from behind, and most probably cut off from all communication with the interior of the town. Well may it be called "the deadly breach:" all fighting is bad enough, but when the valiant soldier sees insurmountable obstacles before him, and finds all his efforts unavailing, and death jostling him on every side, his foot, perhaps, planted on the body of an expiring comrade, whose bleeding mouth is filled with dust, and whose trampled uniform at last becomes identified with the rubbish, and the human form no longer distinguishable; and every instant the heap of the slain accumulating, without any possibility of carrying the place,—then, indeed, comes the "tug of war;" for, as a distinguished officer very justly observed, "A breach may be made the strongest part of a fortification, since every combustible, and power of defence, are brought to a known focus."

Having remained in the trenches a considerable time, we made for the small town of Renteria, where we put up, with two convalescent officers of our own corps, until the next day.

On the 31st the morning broke hazy. Meanwhile before starting for St. Sebastian, we were introduced to Lieutenant Folliet, a young officer of our regiment, who had just come from England for the first time; he expressed much regret at not being able to witness the assault, as he very properly considered it incorrect to leave his detachment, which was ordered to march that morning for Bera. This circumstance I mention, owing to the premature death of this officer.

At half-past ten o'clock, A. M., we took post within cannon range of the ramparts of St. Sebastian, immediately overlooking the river Uru-mea. The troops of the fifth division were already formed in the trenches cut across the isthmus, within a short distance of the body of the place, ready to move forward as soon as the tide should be sufficiently low to admit of a passage. It was so well known that the assault was to take place, that numerous inhabitants had flocked from the adjacent towns and villages, dressed in their holiday attire, and were already seated on the hill which commanded a panoramic view of the town. Many of the women were clothed in dresses of English calico, and in fact composed a motley group and mixture in dress and appearance, such as I had never before seen in Spain. Two pretty Spanish girls were seated

on the slope of the hill, and offered us some of their sugar drops, whereupon we thought we might as well place ourselves beside them as elsewhere. A few minutes before the troops moved to the assault, all within the town seemed tranquil; no noise issued from its walls, nor was a single French soldier visible on the ramparts.

Soon after eleven o'clock, the "forlorn hope," headed by Lieut. Mac Guire of the 4th regiment, sprang out of the trenches, followed by the storming party, and a brigade of the fifth division;* but, owing to the difficulty of extricating themselves from the trenches, and to their *extreme* ardour, they ran towards the *great breach*, discharging their fire arms to the left, to keep down the musketry of the enemy, who galled them by a terrible flanking fire from a bastion which projected nearly parallel, and enfiladed their left flank while moving towards the breach.

Lieut. Mac Guire wore a cocked-hat, with a *long white feather*, to make himself conspicuous. He was a remarkably handsome young man, active of limb, well-made, and possessing a robust frame. He ran forward, amid projectiles and a shower of bullets, with such speed that only *two*

* The fifth division led the attack, *not the volunteers from the army.*

soldiers could manage to keep within five or six yards behind him; and he actually jumped over the broken masonry, at the foot of the breach, before he fell. In a moment afterwards he was hid from our view by the column bounding over his body,* to climb the breach. They had no sooner gained the crest of the breach, than they found the enemy strongly entrenched at each flank of the *TERRE-PLEIN* of the rampart and the interior slope, composed of a scarped wall, nearly thirty feet deep, so that the brave soldiers who mounted the breach fell a sacrifice to their valour, by an overwhelming cross-fire.

The enemy had cleared away the rubbish some feet from a *round tower*, nearly in the centre, and on the crest of the great breach, which they maintained, and it was from this apparently trifling and *unbreached spot* that the troops sustained their principal loss—standing up to their knees in rubbish, and losing their lives without any probability of success. As the French, however, could not well fire on their left flank without hanging over the parapet, our soldiers were enabled to keep their station on the slope of the breach, at the expense of a great number of

* He was killed. I knew him intimately; he possessed naturally gentle manners, with a soldier-like deportment.

officers and men. Had the enemy been able to flank the slope of the breach, all the troops must have been annihilated. The slaughter, however, was so great, as to cause the most serious apprehension, and the wounded and dying were suffering dreadfully, and languishing in the most horrible torments, for want of water, without being again able to regain the trenches, owing to the cross-fire of musketry through which they had to run the gauntlet while advancing to the assault. With the exception of the guns in the castle, the enemy hardly fired any artillery from the walls, either from their being principally dismounted, or that they were unable to depress them sufficiently to do much execution. At this time hardly a word escaped the lips of the astonished spectators; and many of the women were drowned in tears at so doleful a spectacle.

At twelve o'clock General Graham, seeing affairs in this desperate state, ordered the guns from the batteries to open, to oblige the enemy to keep down, and to shield the troops for a short time, from their fatal bullets, and to give them a little breathing time, so as to enable the wounded who could yet walk to regain the trenches. The fire from the batteries was terrific, and the troops retired four or five yards down the slope of the breach, while the heavy shot passed

over their heads, skimming the round tower, the ramparts and the crest of the breach with a precision truly astonishing, so that the enemy could not show their heads, or discharge a single firelock. Never was artillery better served, or opened at a more seasonable moment; and without doubt this was one of the principal causes of carrying the day; for indeed, had it not been for this seasonable relief, the troops must have been inevitably sacrificed by piecemeal. The volumes of smoke arose in dense clouds, and the reverberation was amazing. The iron balls rattled into the devoted town, unroofing the houses, knocking up the dust and rubbish, and thundering against the walls with a tremendous crash, as if the ramparts were cracking and every stone broken, and the whole tumbling into a mass of ruins. All the edifices seemed tottering to the very foundations, and it was as though every living creature within were about to be swallowed up in the vortex and buried amid the utter desolation.

When first the assault took place, the sun shone forth brilliantly; it was now twelve o'clock, and the clouds blackened and gathered together, foreboding the coming storm.

The blazing of the heavy artillery lasted more than half an hour, during which time General Gra-

ham let loose the volunteers and the reserve of the fifth division against the large breach and *adamantine round tower*. The Spanish girls near us ejaculated (while shedding a few pearly tears, and unfolding the little papers containing their sugar-drops,) “ *pobre Sebastiano ! pobre Sebastiano !*” We asked them why they did not say, *poor soldiers*,—“ *Oh si, si,*” answered they, “ *pobres soldados tambien !*”

As soon as the fire of the heavy calibre had ceased, fresh efforts were made against the breach, and the sharp fire of the deadly small arms was resumed. At half past twelve o'clock a Portuguese regiment led on by Lieutenant Colonel Snodgrass* moved along the sands and began to ford the river Urumea, the water at low tide being at this spot about two hundred yards in width. As soon as they reached the middle of the stream, a gun from an embrasure exactly opposite to them discharged a round of grape shot, which fell into the middle of the column, and knocked the men down in every direction : some

* The Portuguese troops forded the river Urumea directly after the firing of the cannon ceased from the English batteries ; and the great explosion to the right of the large breach, (to the left of the breach as we looked towards it,) did not happen until half an hour after this event. It cannot, therefore, be said that our artillery caused that explosion.

of them sank to rise no more, others floundered in the water, and called out for help in the most pitiable manner. The enemy fired a second discharge before the Portuguese could extricate themselves from the stream, (which reached up to the hips), and again inflicted dreadful havoc in their ranks. The smoke of the last round created considerable surprise among us, as it was of a reddish colour, as if red ochre had been mixed up with the powder. The excellent and steady conduct of the 13th regiment of Portuguese was beyond all praise. Having cleared the river they closed up, moved forward and ascended the small breach, eighty yards from the larger one.

At this time we also observed part of the 85th regiment a short distance out at sea (in large boats) apparently threatening the back of the rock, on which stands the Castle of La Motta, but this threat of escalading the rocks was relinquished owing to the impracticability of such an enterprise; the troops in the breaches became fixtures as before, and no further progress towards the capturing of the fortress appeared to be made. At last I saw several soldiers quitting the large breach and running to the right to assist the Portuguese at the small one; and a brave bugler sounded the advance several times. Confused

cries of assembled voices echoed from the ramparts at that point, and we could hear sounds like the battering of fire-locks against doors or barricades, intermingled with occasional firing of musketry. Still, no very serious impression was visible to us.

At one o'clock a violent explosion took place on the rampart behind the French traverse to the right of the large breach, and, before the fragments blown into the air had fallen, or the smoke cleared away, the troops nobly pushed forward, and, at the same time, the crowd of spectators on the hill rose simultaneously with joy beaming on every countenance; and when the hollow sounds of the firing were heard within the interior of the town, we became satisfied that the place was taken.—The explosion was supposed to be caused by accidental sparks, or loose cartridge paper falling on the train. Probably no one living knows the real cause. However, all the French soldiers near the spot were blown into the air, and fell singed and blackened in all directions; and the dead soldiers lay so thick on the slope of the breach that it looked, to the naked eye, as if the mass of troops were still stationary.

Soon after, we saw the French issuing from the town, and firing down upon the British

troops from behind some old walls running in zig zags up the castle hill. There cannot be a shadow of doubt that the place would not have been carried, had it not been for the decision of General Graham, who, persisting in a constant attack to the last, kept the troops in that honorable post to take advantage of any contingencies that might chance to throw open the door to victory. *particulars see vol.*

The enemy lost seven hundred men, prisoners taken in the town, who were unable to reach the castle. The fifth division and the volunteers from the British army lost two thousand men and officers killed and wounded ; amongst the latter Generals Leith, Oswald and Robinson were wounded, and Colonel Fletcher commanding the engineers was killed by a musket ball, just before the assault took place.

At half past one P.M. a heavy mist began to fall, which caused us to bend our course towards Renteria, and, before we reached half a league, the rain descended in torrents ; but none had fallen during the storming of the breaches.

CHAPTER II.

The Duke of Dalmatia crosses the Bidassoa—Sharp contest at the heights of St. Marzial and the Bridge of Bera—Touching scene witnessed by the Author on his way to rejoin his division at Santa Barbara—A present from England—Passage of the Bidassoa by the English troops on the 6th of October—Active fighting—The French driven over the mountains into their own territory—Delights of good quarters after hard work—Reconnoitring—Habits and condition of the Spanish soldiery—A mock fight—Military pastimes—Preparations for the invasion of France.

ON the same day that the assault of St. Sebastian took place, the Duke of Dalmatia, with the right wing of his army, crossed the Bidassoa, opposite to the heights of St. Marzial, and another division forded the river two hundred yards below Bera (under cover of the high rock, which rises abruptly over the west end of the town) and immediately moved forward to attack the heights above the village of Salines, occupied by part of the seventh division, with whom and the

Portuguese the enemy were engaged the greater part of the day. The French repeatedly endeavoured to climb the heights of St. Marzial without effect. The ascent was so difficult, that the Spaniards had little more to do than to deliver their fire, by which they managed, in the presence of Field-marshal the Marquis of Wellington, to beat the enemy.

The French marshal, when he saw his soldiers giving way and plunging into the Bidasoa, became perfectly furious, for, owing to this unsuccessful attack, the French above Salines were obliged to grope their way down the uneven and slippery mountain, in search of the ford which they had previously crossed (in the morning) in good order, and in the highest spirits. When, however, they now reached the river after exceeding toil and in total darkness, they found it so swollen, owing to the floods from the mountains, that they could not attempt to cross it. The wind howled fiercely; the roaring torrents, and vast bodies of water, poured down the sides of the mountains, rocks and water courses, swelling the river into an overwhelming flood, which rushed through the narrow arches of the bridge of Bera, with irresistible fury. In short, a perfect hurricane raged over the mountains, and swept throughout the valleys, in boisterous whirlwinds, that

carried away in their fearful blasts branches of trees, and bellowed furiously over the tops of the forests.

During this awful convulsion of the elements, a few stragglers of the French division succeeded in overpowering a corporal's picquet, and rushed over the bridge of Bera; but a company of the second battalion of rifle corps, which occupied the shell of a house, immediately forced them to recross the bridge. Again the enemy several times attempted to cross the bridge at the *pas de charge*, but were as often beaten back by the well-plied bullets of the rifles; and, strange to relate, this picquet and the French division continued engaged within five hundred yards of the French post above Bera, and not more than twice the distance from the second brigade of the light division which occupied the rising ground in front of the *debouché* of San Estevan,—the first brigade having crossed to the left bank of Bidassoa on the previous day, in support of the seventh division. When too late, another company arrived to their assistance; but morning dawned and the odds were too great; the captain commanding, when in the act of mounting his horse, was shot through the body, and the French rushed across the bridge. This was a most extraordinary fight, while the storm was so tremendous that the musketry

could hardly be heard ; and neither the French nor the English army gave an effectual helping hand to their comrades during this wild contest.

On the morning of the 1st of September we started from Renteria, to return to our division, and had only travelled a short distance when we met and questioned some wounded Spaniards, who gave a very vague account of the fighting on the preceding day, and all that we could extract from them was "*Oh ! señores mucho combate ayer.*" We pursued the rugged road, and met an English soldier, who told us that there had been some sharp fighting all along the ridge of the mountains on the left of the Bidassoa ; but he could not inform us whether the enemy had advanced or retired. This piece of intelligence made it advisable to keep a sharp look-out. We soon, however, met Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, one of the General-in-Chief's aides-de-camp, who gave us every information, and told us that the road of communication was now quite open to Bera.

Having travelled another league, we arrived, by a wild and crooked road, at the summit of a mountain covered with oak trees, where we saw a soldier of our regiment standing by the side of a goatherd's roofless hut, who told us that his master, Lieut. Folliet, had been mortally wounded four hours

after we had taken leave of him on the previous day. A body of the enemy had pushed through the forest beyond the left flank of a brigade of the seventh division, and, rushing furiously through the wood towards the little detachment with loud shouts, and a rattling fusillade, had succeeded in scattering these young soldiers. On entering the hut, we saw the youthful sufferer, deadly pale, lying on his back, with his uniform, sash, sword and cap, died in blood and strewed about on the loose stones or rock, which formed the floor of the miserable hut. On seeing us, he extended his hand, and a momentary gleam of joy passed across his pallid features, as he mildly informed us that he was dying from a wound in the abdomen, which had caused him excruciating torture until mortification had ensued. He was quite resigned to his fate, and begged that we would not give way to melancholy, for that he was quite happy, and only hoped we thought he had done his duty; that the only grief he felt was from not having seen the regiment, the summit of all his ambition—before he expired. In a few hours he was no more; and having been enveloped in a blanket, he was interred under the wide-spreading branches of an oak tree, by the side of the ruined hut.

Little at that time did my *three companions*

anticipate that, before the expiration of three months, two of them would be *buried* in regions equally inhospitable. Lieut. Baillie was shot through the head, Captain Murchison in the groin, and Lieut. James Considine was dangerously wounded.

In the evening we rejoined our brigade, which had returned to Santa Barbara, when we felt considerable pleasure in hearing they had not been engaged during our five days' absence,

During the month of September, the enemy worked hard in sawing and felling timber to form abattis, and in constructing entrenchments. The right and left of our own army were employed in a similar manner.

Towards the end of the month, I observed one of my messmates winding along the crest of the mountain, on his way from England, having recovered from a terrible wound. Our joy at meeting was very great; his at finding me still in the land of the living, and mine at seeing an old friend, whom, when last we parted, I never cherished the hope of meeting again.

The baggage being unpacked, his soldier servant, who had accompanied him, came up with a good-tempered smile; and, while unfolding a dingy pocket handkerchief, intimated that he had brought me a present from England. "Well!

what is it?" said I, my curiosity being somewhat excited; but he continued to unfold his offering, wrapped in layers of paper, without making any express reply, and at length brought forth a piece of bread, which he had taken from a dinner table in England. This he handed to me, certainly in a very mouldy state, owing to the length of the voyage, but the compliment was equally appreciated. I thanked him for his kind recollection of me, and ate it on the spot.

On the 6th of October, it was intimated that the enemy were to be attacked on the following morning; such information, however, made no difference either in our conversation or reflexions.

This day Lieut. Fry,* of the rifle corps, dined with us. The soup was made with bullocks' tails; the spiced minced-meat was of bullocks' heads, and the third course consisted of a bullock's heart.

Soon after dark an orderly entered the tent, and informed me that I was ordered to descend into the valley before daylight, with a reinforcement to the picquet, destined to begin the attack on the morrow. "Ah, now that is very strange," ejaculated one of the party; "for last night I dreamed that you (meaning myself) were killed skirmishing

* Our friend of the rifle corps was shot through the leg the next morning.

up the opposite mountain." I returned thanks to him for this pleasant piece of intelligence.

On reaching the valley, at the appointed hour, before daybreak, I found the officers of the company in a profound slumber, stretched on the floor, and the commander lying on a table in a small farmhouse; but, as I had no inclination to sleep, I stirred up the dying embers of the wood fire, and purposely made so much noise, that I thoroughly aroused the sleepers into a conversational mood; and one of them announced the pleasing information, that he could supply us with coffee,—which was carefully boiled in a pipkin, and which we partook of with considerable zest, to fortify our stomachs for the morning combat.

The passage of the river Bidassoa began at daylight, by the extreme left of the army, personally directed by Field-marshal Wellington. The fifth division crossed near the mouth of the river, and the first division began the attack early in the morning. Lord Aylmer's brigade, and a corps of Spaniards, also forded the river at various places, covered by some pieces of cannon stationed on the heights of St. Marzial. Here a sharp contest took place, particularly against the fifth division, while ascending the steep, and difficult mountains. The enemy, being attacked at so many points at once, by the various fords,

were outflanked right and left, and were finally beaten off this tremendous range of mountains: the fourth division were in reserve behind Bera, and also deployed on the heights of Santa Barbara, to support the light division.

An hour after daylight, the whole of the picquets of the light division in front of Bera, first began the attack of a detached ridge, called the Boar's Back, from its jagged summit. It was necessary to carry this before the division could debouch through the town of Bera, for the attack of the main position, covered by forts and abattis. The 3rd rifles began to skirmish up one end of the Boar's Back, and we on the other; it was only defended by a small body of French troops, and was speedily carried.

The second brigade, under Sir John Colborne, began a sharp attack on a great tongue of the mountain, which sloped down towards Bera; but the first effort proved unsuccessful against a square fort, which the enemy held with great resolution, and not only beat off the attack, but in their turn sallied from the works, and drove, with the bayonet, numbers of the assailants over the rugged precipices.

At this critical moment, the 52d regiment, being in reserve, advanced in column, and bore against the stragglers in such good order, that

they not only pushed them back, but drove them pell-mell into the fort on one side, and out at the other; in fact, they appeared literally to walk over the entrenchment. I had an admirable view of this affair from the top of the rock already carried, and from which it was necessary to descend before we could ascend the principal ridge.

The second brigade continued to advance; but the ground was so difficult, that at every step they met with a severe loss, in killed and wounded. At the end of three hours, when they had nearly gained the summit of the mountain, the enemy rolled (from a strong entrenchment) large stones down upon them, and by this mode of warfare, with a sprinkling of balls, kept them at bay for a considerable time.

In the meantime the first brigade, under General Sir James Kempt, had pushed through Bera to support the skirmishers, who moved parallel, with the second brigade, or rather branched off by degrees a little to the right, and engaged the enemy up the mountain leading into France. The obstacles on each side of the way rendered the mountain fearfully difficult of ascent; and it was, indeed, so intersected with rocks, trees, brushwood, and prickly briars, that our hands and limbs were pierced with thorns, and the trousers were literally torn in shreds

from off our legs. When half way up the mountain, we emerged from the entangling thicket, fatigued and deluged with perspiration, and found the enemy plying bullets from a small fort. As soon as a sufficient number of men could be scraped together, we gained possession of that post by a charge of the bayonet: from thence we overlooked a very small field, enclosed by rocks, wherefrom the enemy, consisting of three or four hundred men, could no longer extricate themselves, and fell into our hands, or, more properly speaking, were left in a trap, in a valley between the first and second brigades. These captives may be fairly ascribed as prisoners to the first brigade, since they were within point blank of us, and not within a mile of the second brigade, who did not discharge a single shot at them, but on the contrary had quite enough to do, independently of that affair, in clearing the ground of the enemy opposed to them, from whom they took three pieces of cannon, which were abandoned in the entrenchments.

After three hours' toil and clambering from rock to rock, we arrived within two hundred yards of the summit of the *puerta de Bera*, which was defended by a few hundred of the enemy; the remainder of their face was extended in order to oppose the second brigade, and to the right,

along the wooded ridge, as far as the rock of la Rhune, distant about two miles from the extreme right of our division, to oppose the Spaniards. The rolling of musketry was now incessant on all sides.

It was here I saw the remarkable death of one of the rifle corps, who had killed a French soldier, and who, before he had taken his rifle from the level, received a ball through his body, which caused him such excruciating agony, that his face was all at once distorted, his eyes rolled, and his lips, blackened with the biting of cartridges, convulsively opened. His teeth were tightly clenched; his arms and legs were thrown into an extended position, and he held out his rifle, grasped at arm's length, and remained stationary in this extraordinary attitude for a few moments, until he dropped down dead, as suddenly as if struck by a flash of lightning.

As soon as the skirmishers had gained the top of the mountain, Sir James Kempt rode up amongst the flying bullets, and expressed his approbation of all that had been done; for the skirmishers alone had grouped into a compact body, and forced the pass at the point of the bayonet, and the French were now running in all directions. To attempt to express our boundless delight at the grandeur and extreme beauty of the surround-

ing scenery would be impossible. Behind us lay the prodigious mountains and gloomy fastnesses of the Pyrenees, whose rocks, cast in nature's roughest mould, towered one above another as far as the eye could reach. To the north, the dark blue waters of the tranquil ocean glittered in the sun beams; and various distant white sails skirted the remote horizon. Beneath us lay the supposed sacred fields of France, the towns of Bayonne and St. Jean de Luz, the rivers Nivelle, Nive, Adour, and innumerable tributary streams, which laced and meandered near vine-clad hills, through verdant valleys, whose banks were decorated with a luxuriant foliage; whilst the country was studded with countless spires of churches and red-topped villages, chateaux, farm-houses, and rural white cottages, enclosed by gardens, and shrouded by fruit trees and plantations.

The Spaniards made several attempts to climb the mountain of la Rhune, crowned by a tremendous bare rock, which rose in frowning majesty above their heads. They endeavoured to hide beneath the various shelving rocks, or behind the forest trees, from the dreadful effects of the fragments of rock, or loose stones, hurled down upon them by the enemy, and which bounded with a terrific crash into the deep valleys.

The General quitted the skirmishers at the top

of the *puerta de Bera*, to bring up the reserves ; but our enthusiasm was so great at the idea of taking possession of French ground, which seemed more than a compensation for all our Spanish toils, that three hundred of us descended the pass of the mountain, and pursued the enemy for a league and a half into France, where, to the left, we could distinguish the French columns retreating from Hendaye, and various other points, whence they were driven by the left of our army in the greatest confusion, and were counter-marching round the unfinished batteries in front of St. Jean de Luz, and, in a hurried manner, pointing their cannon towards the various roads, and other debouchés leading respectively to them.

The various farm-houses were deserted by the inhabitants, who left their doors wide open, as if to invite the ravenous invaders to help themselves. Here we spent the day in rural delight, on the top of a pretty green hill, encircled by orchards, on which we built a hut, and tied a pocket-handkerchief to a twig by way of a flag, within a mile of the enemy. A thousand gratifying reflections here arose in our minds, and enlivened our occupations ; while the contented soldiers of Spain, with arms in their hands, brought us wines, fruits, and other delicacies, without having committed one

outrageous act, or despoiling the property of the peaceable inhabitants, further than helping themselves to the excellent rations of goose, turkey and hams, already cooked, and preserved in hogs' lard ; added to which, there was a plentiful supply of nice soft bread, which afforded us a most excellent repast.

The day having closed on this *fête champêtre*, we kindled a few extra fires, re-formed, and re-trod our way to the top of the pass in time for supper. The first brigade had taken possession of the boarded and well-roofed huts, constructed by the French with the utmost regularity, as if they had anticipated the occupation of them during the approaching winter. My messmates had already made themselves quite at home in one of them, and the cook was busily employed in roasting a nice piece of beef, which had been extracted out of a little cavity, dug by the late occupier, to keep it fresh and cool, no doubt for some contemplated feast. While partaking of this delicious *morceau*, we failed not to remember the original provider, the French officer ; while he, less fortunate, most probably spent the night in a cold bivouac, or under a gun, in the entrenchments near St. Jean de Luz.

During the whole night the fatigue parties continued to arrive from Santa Barbara, with their

knapsacks, which had been left there;* and also carrying, in blankets or in bearers, the wretched wounded soldiers, whom they had discovered, by their groans, amongst chasms, cavities, or beneath the prickly briars on the broken sides of the mountains. Many unfortunate soldiers had fallen into deep ravines or hollows; and their dead bodies were subsequently discovered by those who accidentally wandered off the beaten tracts amongst these difficult acclivities.

The right wing of the army in their turn demonstrated during the combat of the 7th, guarding the mountains from Echalar to Roncesvalles; while the left wing, after the combat, held the ridge from the rock of la Rhune (which the enemy evacuated on the 8th), to the Bay of Biscay; which totally dispossessed the right of the French army from the mountains of Comissari, Mandale, and the height of Hendaye. As soon as the French had evacuated the mountain of la Rhune, the first brigade of our division moved to its right, and encamped in a forest within half a mile of its base. The second brigade took our post at the *puerta de Bera*.

In the middle of October the weather became

* The troops always fought with their knapsacks on; and this is the only time I ever knew them left behind, except when storming breaches of fortresses, or escalading forts.

cold and dismal, and the rains poured down in torrents. The Spaniards having seized a fort, in the French territory, in the valley below the pass of Echalar, the enemy one night retook it, by a *coup de main*, putting many of the Spaniards to death before they could recover from their surprise, or even put on their accoutrements. A desultory skirmish however continued the whole of the following day by the Spaniards, who seemed particularly attached to this mode of warfare, although the French evidently gained ground; which circumstance forced five companies of our regiment to take post on the rock to prevent the French from following the Spaniards to the top, and driving them from it. Night put an end to these *long shots*, and this waste of ammunition.

Every other day it fell to my lot to ascend this rock on duty, with a huge telescope slung on my back, to report to the General, in writing, any movements of the enemy. From this pinnacle their bivouacs might be seen from right to left. This duty was extremely disagreeable: the custom was to start at day-light from the saturated camp, attended by an orderly, and a mule loaded on one side with fire wood, and on the other with a tea kettle, provisions, and a blanket. La Rhune was bare and comfortless, and often wrapped for whole days in a chilly mist. On the

east and west it was inaccessible, having only one narrow path way winding up the south; on the north side it sloped down gradually towards la Petite la Rhune being composed of tremendous overlapping slabs of rock, presenting the most desolate aspect.

One day, while on this duty, I observed a numerous retinue of French staff-officers emerge from behind la Petite la Rhune, and from their motions and gestures it was evident that they were examining the most commanding eminences for the purpose of constructing works for its defence. The whole of them were in uniform, with large cocked hats,* blue pantaloons, and boots with brown tops.

Some hundreds of Spaniards† were bivouacked round the old ruins of the hermitage at the top of this mountain, where, for want of good clothing, and owing to the cold nights, they were in the most miserable and forlorn state, and had barely

* The French army wore very high cocked hats; the English quite the reverse; the latter was called the Wellington hat.

† General Longa's corps were by far the most miserable of any I had ever seen in the Spanish service; but, considering they were doomed to inhabit a cheerless mass of rocks in such attire, I thought them worthy of description; some of the other Spanish corps were well dressed; but the whole of the army suffered more or less, owing to an indifferent supply of rations;—privations which they seemed to bear with unexampled patience.

a sufficiency of provisions to keep life and soul together; these necessary comforts were irregularly served out, and in such small quantities, that the cravings of hunger were seldom or ever satisfied. When they were fortunate enough to get a meal, the ceremony of eating it was very curious: the rations for twenty or thirty men were mixed in a large kettle or cauldron, round which they formed a circle and approached it, one at a time, from the right, each dipping in his spoon, and then resuming his original place, to make the most of it, until it came again to his turn. In this manner they continued to advance and retire, with the utmost circumspection, until the whole of it was consumed. Their clothing was ragged and miserable as their fare: uniforms of all countries and all the colours of the rainbow, *French chakos* without peaks, leather and brass helmets, rusty muskets, and belts which had never been cleaned since in their possession. Some had old brown cloaks, with empty knapsacks and hempen sandals, and others were with torn shoes and almost bare-footed.

At the solitary roll of the drum, they sometimes issued from their burrows, or cavities of the rocks like so many rabbits. One day while standing on a large slab of rock like a tomb stone, all at once, to my surprise, I felt it in motion, and on

looking down perceived a slight smoke issuing from the crevices on each side, and, while stepping aside, the stone nearly gave way with me; several voices then cried out from below: "*Demónio, demónio, que quiere usted!*" when, springing off the rickety foundation, to my astonishment, the slab was slowly lifted up on the heads of a dozen Spaniards, who were crouching in the cave, enveloped in the fumes of *cigarras* which they smoked to keep themselves warm, to drive away hunger, and to beguile the tedious hours!

Before the troops quitted this chilly region, many of the sentinels were so benumbed with cold, that they fell down with stiffened limbs, and were obliged to be carried from their posts.

One day, being as usual on the look out, I saw the French hard at work in constructing three forts on la Petite la Rhune, which were built with pieces of rock and loose stones, with incredible labour; and a long string of the enemy, by single files, reached into the valley behind the small mountain, and were traversing backwards and forwards like a swarm of ants, being employed in handing up the stones from one to the other.

In the evening another officer and myself were winding beneath the base of the rock of the great la Rhune, on our return to camp, when a large stone bounded over our heads, and on looking

above, we observed an officer of our regiment, (who was on picquet,) pushing down the wall of the old ruin from the summit of the mountain, and calling out to us, in derision, to keep out of the way. Fortunately we found a projecting rock, underneath which we screened ourselves from the broken fragments that came tumbling down with nearly the velocity of cannon balls, making terrific bounds of two or three hundred yards at a time, and rolling into the distant valley with a terrible crash. We saw one piece of rock strike a tree in the forest below, and shiver the trunk asunder; and in this way our antagonist kept us prisoners until it was nearly dark, for whenever we made an effort to move, down tumbled more stones, which obliged us to run back to our hiding place. Having, at last, effected our escape, we vowed vengeance, and on meeting him (when relieved from picquet), we got our spears in readiness to put our threats into execution. These poles or spears we carried in imitation of the Basque mountaineers, to assist us up the jagged rocks; and, after long practise, we could throw them twenty or thirty yards with great velocity, and almost with unerring aim and precision. He reminded us however, of a circumstance which induced us to let him off, namely, that a party of us had nearly drowned him in the river Agueda, two

years before. He was a very expert swimmer, but he annoyed those who went to bathe to such a degree, by splashing them, that one day, when he was in the middle of the river, we sallied from behind the rocks, on both banks of the river, encircled him, and gave him such a ducking, that it was with the utmost difficulty he could reach the shore, after a lesson which had induced him to behave with more gentleness for the future.

During the month of October,* our days passed tediously, and we resorted to the most simple pastimes, whenever the weather would admit of a ramble. Sometimes we fired with ball at the eagles and vultures; and at others, chased the herds of wild ponies, which browsed in the sequestered valleys of the Pyrenees. They were hardly beyond the size of wolf-dogs, and had wiry coats, and long shaggy manes and tails. It was astonishing to see these sure-footed little animals, with small heads and wild eyes, capering, prancing, and darting through the underwood, and up and down the steep acclivities.

One day a Spanish soldier brought to our camp a pretty little fat pony for sale; and after a good

* On the 31st of October, the French garrison at Pampeluna surrendered themselves prisoners of war for want of provisions, which circumstance now cleared the rear of our army, and enabled it to make offensive movements.

deal of bargaining, he sold it to our mess for twelve dollars. The following morning a Spanish officer deliberately walked up to the tree, to which our animals were tied, and to our surprise demanded *his* pony. We assured him we had purchased it; but as he declared it had been stolen from him, and had witnesses at hand to identify the animal, we were obliged to give it up, with the loss of our twelve dollars, for we knew not where to search for the *picaro*, or *dispensero mayor*, who had so completely jockeyed us. It behoved us to put up with the loss as philosophically as might be.

While the heavy rains continued, in the beginning of November, we were obliged to construct wicker-work huts, to save the horses, mules, and milch goats from perishing during the inclemency of the weather; for days together our tents were pierced by the heavy rains, and often, being without candles and other little comforts, in self-defence, we had to lie down in our damp blankets, to endeavour to pass the tedious hours of the night.

Two or three evenings before we broke up our camp for the grand invasion of France, we were much diverted by the doleful cries of an *owl*, which had perched itself in the deep recess of an adjacent valley, and, whenever imitated by us,

failed not to return our mockery in her very best and most plaintive screeches !

At this time the weather cleared up, and the three-pounders, mountain guns, passed through our wooded camp. The carriages, guns, ammunition boxes, and iron balls, were strapped separately on the backs of a string of powerful mules; and these guns could be, therefore, conveyed so as to bear on the enemy from cliffs, or craggy elevations. The sure-footed mules would ascend or descend steeps, dried water-courses, or crooked goat-tracks; and would pick their steps from rock to rock, planting their feet cautiously for a good foundation, or a firm hold.

CHAPTER III.

Advance of the light division—Singular nocturnal orgies—Skirmishing preliminary to the battle of the Nivelle—Details of that battle—British head-quarters established at St. Jean de Luz—More skirmishing, and a slight reverse—Combative anecdotes—Advance of the British line of picquets.

ON the evening of the 9th of November, the division received orders to move during the night, for the purpose of taking up its ground previously to the attack on the enemy's position in France, on the following morning. The whole of the ample store of ready-cut wood, (a portion of which had been split up by the officers to keep themselves in exercise,) was piled up, and a monstrous fire kindled, which soon burst into a tremendous blaze, throwing a bright glare on the distant objects moving between the trees of the forest. At the usual hour, the owl began to utter

her notes, and continued her cries longer than heretofore; all which was construed into something ominous by Lieut. Baillie, a sinewy young Highlander, who, with an eagle's wings held on each shoulder, which he had shot with a single ball a few days before, recited those tragic lines sung by the witches in *Macbeth*, as we all joined hands and danced around the crackling faggots, and sang in chorus, which at intervals was intermingled with the screeches of the aforesaid owl. The flickering and livid glare of the flames, glancing on the scarlet uniforms, the red sparks flying over the forest, and the soldiers packing and beating their knapsacks, gave an unusual wildness to our midnight orgies.

Before striking our tent, we partook of a comfortable breakfast, after which we each secured a biscuit, of American manufacture; they were of a peculiar hardness (nearly an inch thick), so much so, that it required the stamp of an iron heel, or some hard substance, to break them. An officer jocularly remarked, while placing one of them under the breast of his jacket, that it might turn a ball,—which actually occurred.*

* A musket-ball perforated the biscuit, which caused the bullet, after passing under the fleshy part of the breast, and round the ribs, to glance off and pierce quite through the thick part of the left arm.

During the darkness we got under arms, and moved silently under the north-west side of la Rhune, by a narrow pathway, which had been cut at that point to facilitate the passage of the troops to the destined point of attack, within a few hundred yards of the enemy's outposts. We had scarcely taken up our ground, when we perceived the flash of a cannon, fired by the enemy on the high road to Saint Jean de Luz, and immediately followed by five others from the same spot. The conclusion was, that these discharges were fired as a signal; for, soon after, we heard the martial sounds of the French drums beating to arms, over a great extent of country, *au petit point du jour*: our eyes anxiously glanced towards the spot, where we expected to see the second brigade of the division already formed. But nothing seemed to be under the rough side of the mountain of Siboure, except slabs of rock; when, all of a sudden, as if by magic, the whole of the fancied rocks were in motion; and as the haze gradually cleared away, we could see the soldiers packing the blankets with which they had covered themselves, having taken up their ground long before us, as they had had a greater distance to march.

The rising of the sun above the horizon was to be the signal for the battle of the Nivelle to begin; or, if the weather proved cloudy, the

heavy artillery (which had been dragged with great difficulty through the pass of Echalar,) were to open on the French occupying a fort, which had been constructed to block up the break of the ridge of the Pyrenees leading towards the village of Sare, in France. The sky was free from clouds, and a sharp cold wind whistled through the barren and cheerless rocks, whilst all eyes were directed towards the east, watching the inflamed orb of the sun as he rose to view. Our regiment, under Major W. Napier, then fixed bayonets, and rapidly moved forward in column to the assault of the three stone forts on the top of la Petite la Rhune; two companies rushed forward to skirmish, four formed into line, and four supported in column. The heavy guns opened at the puerta de Echalar; part of our brigade moved further to the right; the second brigade scrambled over the rocks, precipices, and ravines, to take the enemy in reverse; and the mountain guns fired into the forts from a ledge of ragged grey rocks.

In a few minutes we reached the summit of the small mountain by a green slope (not unlike a large breach) within twenty yards of the walls of the first fort. The soldiers and officers gasped for breath: many of the former, from the weight of their knapsacks and accoutrements, staggered

and fell, and, before they could recover their limbs, were pierced with bullets to rise no more; the officers led on in a group and carried the first fort. The second was then attacked hand to hand, the French using their bayonets and the butt ends of their pieces; one of our officers gallantly jumped into the second fort, and a French soldier thrust a bayonet through his neckhandkerchief, transfixing him to the wall, and then fired his piece which blew away the officer's collar, who jumped up unhurt. Another officer, while clambering up the wall, received a most tremendous blow on the fingers with the butt-end of a firelock, which made him glad to drop his hold; and we were so hard pressed, that one or two of the officers seized the dead soldiers' firelocks and fought with them. Among others, Sir Andrew Barnard of the rifle corps joined in this hard fight.

As the enemy rushed out of the second fort, a little athletic man with red hair eagerly followed a French officer; the Frenchman parried two of his thrusts, but finding his men giving way, he turned suddenly round and made off, and the soldier, fearing his prey might escape, hurled his firelock at him; the bayonet flew through the back of his body, and he fell heavily on his face with the weight of the musket and the bayonet still stick-

ing in him. Another French officer, who had shewn a noble example of heroism, stood on the top of the wall with both his eyes hanging on his cheeks, with his short cloak flapping in the wind, and not daring to move from his perilous position, lest he should tumble headlong down the steep precipice of many hundred feet in depth.

The forts being now carried, I seized the hand of an officer to congratulate him on his escape ; the next instant he was down with a horrible wound, and a ball grazed my left cheek.

Thus, in ten minutes, six companies assaulted a tremendous post, and carried three forts at the point of the bayonet. It was one of the best contested fights I ever saw ; but ten officers were killed and wounded, and nearly a hundred men. General Sir James Kempt, and his gallant aide-de-camp, the Honourable C. Gore, had urged their horses up the rocks with hats off, and were cheering us on while carrying the third fort, when the General was wounded in the wrist of the right arm.

The four companies in support had moved forward at a moderate pace and in good order, to succour us in case of need ; but finding there was nothing more to be done at this point, and seeing a line of the enemy in front of a star fort, a few hundred yards distant, they became

wild with impatience to share in the combat, and simultaneously burst into a run ; and it was only by Sir James Kempt's galloping a-head of them that he could restrain their ardour. He was well aware the movement of the second brigade would entirely dispossess the enemy of La Petite la Rhune without further bloodshed.

From this post we had an admirable view of the fourth and seventh divisions, who had succeeded in capturing the fort opposite St. Barbe, and were now debouching on the rugged ground, and bringing up their right shoulders in succession to form a line of battle in front of the ridge of Sare. The second, third, and sixth divisions formed the right, coming down the pass of Maya.

The enemy's main position convexed in the centre, and extended about twelve miles, as the bird flew ; but a greater distance to march, owing to the windings of roads, rivulets, and the steep and barren country lying towards their centre and left. Their right was posted in front of Saint Jean de Luz, amid fortified chateaux, farm-houses, villages, woods, and orchards, converted into formidable abattis, and partly defended by an inundation, and fifty pieces of heavy artillery. Their centre rested on the rocky heights of La Petite la Rhune, the ridge of Sare, and adjacent eminences which were crowned with redoubts.

Their left was stationed on the heights of Ainhoue on the right bank of the Nivelle, which was also strongly entrenched.

The extreme left of our army consisted of the first and fifth divisions, Lord Alymer's brigade, a corps of Spaniards, with artillery and two brigades of cavalry under General Hope* to demonstrate and to guard the high road to Spain, while the centre and left of the army were employed in more active operations.

The firing and rolling of musketry were now vehement to our right towards the village of Sare. On the first retreat of the enemy, they had set fire to some hundreds of huts built of fern and wicker work, near the rocks of St. Antoine, but soon returned with drums beating the *pas de charge*, to endeavour to retake them from the Spaniards. The smoke, however, was so dense, owing to the wind blowing direct in their faces, that they were forced from the contest, more from the heat of the flames and downright suffocation than the good management of their antagonists, who, as usual, plied them with long shots.

As soon as the fourth and seventh divisions were well engaged with the enemy under General

* General Graham having gone to Holland, to take the command of a separate British force in that country.

Beresford, aided by the third division moving to its left, who were combating and driving the enemy up the heights east of Sare, our division descended from La Petite la Rhune, left in front for the purpose of attacking the great redoubt in the centre, on the bare mountain of Esneau, near Ascain. It was defended on all sides by clouds of skirmishers, engaged with the Caçadores and rifles of our division. Here Sir Andrew Barnard fell pierced through the body with a musket-ball amongst the light troops. The rattling of small arms was incessant and very destructive on the 52nd regiment, under Sir John Colborne, which suffered a most severe loss while moving round, and to the rear of the large square redoubt. After some parleying, nearly six hundred of the 88th French, finding themselves forsaken by their main body, surrendered prisoners of war; but their commander gave way to the most bitter invectives.

After night-fall, the flashes of the fire-arms of General Hill's corps still brightly sparkled, while driving onwards and making their last efforts and discharges to decide the victory, and turn the left flank of the enemy,—which obliged them during the night to evacuate St. Jean de Luz, and retire to Bayonne, leaving fifty pieces of cannon in their formidable lines in front of the

former place. Field-marshal Wellington directed the attack of the right of our army against the left of the French.

At night some companies of our division were pushed into a valley on picquet ; and at nine we observed the heather of the camp had caught fire, illuminating the country for miles around, while the men and animals were seen gliding about, representing a sort of phantasmagoria. By degrees the fire reached the base of the hill and ignited a small forest ; and two hours after midnight we were encompassed with a sheet of flames, crackling and whizzing with terrific violence ; and the heat was so overpowering that we were glad to cross a rivulet, to save ourselves from being consumed by this conflagration. To add to our night's misery, my companion was groaning from excessive pain caused by the rap over the knuckles given him while we were storming the forts.

At ten o'clock on the following day our division edged off to the right and crossed the Nivelle by a small stone bridge near St. Pé. The whole army moved forward in three columns, the right marching upon Souraide and Espelette and taking post on the left bank of the Nive, at Cambo, Ustaritz, and the vicinity, to watch the enemy on the right bank of that river ; the centre on Arrauntz and Arbonne, and the left crossing the

Nivelle at the town and vicinity of Saint Jean de Luz, and advancing through Guethary on Bidart, eight miles from Bayonne. In the afternoon it came on to rain, while we were marching through *le bois de St. Pé*. The roads were very deep, and we passed the night shivering and wallowing in the grass and mud of a saturated plantation.

The head quarters of the general-in-chief were now established at Saint Jean de Luz, an old town situated on the right bank of the river Nivelle, and within a few hundred yards of the sea coast. Through this town the high road runs from Spain to Bayonne, the latter place being strongly fortified and situated at the junction of the Nive with the Adour. The enemy occupied the farm-houses and villas three miles in front of the fortress. A morass, which was only passable at two places covered an entrenched camp which was within cannon shot of the ramparts of Bayonne. The left of our army fronted the enemy, forming a line amidst chateaux, farm-houses, woods, heaths, plantations, hedges, swamps and ditches, as far as the sea-coast, the right being thrown back towards Ustaritz and Cambo, facing the French who lined the right bank of the Nive, as far as St. Jean Pied de Port. With the sea therefore on our left, the river Adour and Bayonne in our front, the river Nive on our right, and the lofty

mountains of the Pyrenees at our backs—it may fairly be said that the army were in a *cul de sac*. The great strength of this frontier seems, particularly during the winter, hardly to be understood ; for beyond the river Nive many rapid rivers cut across, and intersect the muddy country and clayey roads, so as to make offensive operations very difficult.

The advanced posts of our first brigade were in a church behind the village of Arcangues, at a château two hundred yards east of it, and at a cottage half a mile further to the right, situated close to a lake, on the other side of which was the château of Chenie, on a rising ground, and enclosed by the small plantation of Berriots, through which a road runs towards Ustaritz. The second brigade prolonged their line towards a deep valley which separated them from the fifth division, holding the plateau, in the neighbourhood of a château on the high road to Bayonne, six or seven miles in front of St. Jean de Luz.

On the 23rd of November, it was deemed advisable to make some alteration in our line of posts ; accordingly our first brigade formed at the château behind the village of Arcangues, and four companies of our regiment advanced to execute the mission entrusted to them ; but, being led on by too great ardor, we came in front

of a large farm-house, strongly entrenched near Bassussarry. Here the musketry was plied on both sides with unusual vivacity. Having pushed through a small plantation to our left of the fortified house, we found ourselves within twenty yards of it. A brave soldier sprang forward before he could be restrained, and, levelling his piece, cried out, "I have been at the storming of Rodrigo, Badajoz, and Saint Sebastian; there is no ball made for me*." As soon as he had fired, he fell dead, pierced with numerous bullets through his head and body.

This was *indeed* a skirmish; for in a very short time we lost ninety men killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. A brave young officer† seeing things going hard (and hearing the advance sounded) rushed across a field to our left, sword in hand, and, outstripping the company, when close to the enemy, who were formed behind a ditch, was shot through the head, and tumbled into it a lifeless corpse. The officer commanding the company jumped into it, and caught him in his arms; twenty soldiers had also followed and

* This man, made use of similar expressions, while storming the forts on the 10th of November.

† This is the officer who repeated the tragic lines in Macbeth, while dancing round the fire the night before the battle of the Nivelle, thirteen days before.

tried to clamber the wet clayey bank,*but could neither do that nor extricate themselves from this awkward position. Overwhelmed by numbers, they were obliged to surrender themselves prisoners, as well as the commander* of the company, whose uniform was streaming with blood, while he was still supporting the dead lieutenant in his arms. We also were so near the enemy that I was obliged to give orders, in an under tone, for the men to cease firing, as the French threw twenty bullets to one. Fortunately the small trees were so thickly set, they could not distinguish us, and ceased firing, but we could distinctly see them leaning carelessly over a wall. While they were chattering away, I passed the word to our soldiers who were lying concealed amongst the small trees, and underwood, that when I should hold up my pocket handkerchief as a signal, a volley was to be fired. This took full effect.

A sergeant of ours was lying on his breast, and had scarcely taken his fusee from the level, when a ball passed in at the centre of his forehead. He instantly rolled on his back, groaned heavily, and

* He was made prisoner while travelling through France on his way to Verdun, his carriage was surrounded by a party of Cossacks, who were going to pike him, when he luckily made himself understood; then being conducted to the allied army, he was most kindly treated and instantly liberated.

kicked out his legs, covering the spot with a liquid stream of blood. Sir James Kempt, ever first in the fight and last out of it, having taken his station at a house within musket-range, had now ordered a bugler to sound the "retire," after two hours' fighting; and it was quite time, for all the companies engaged had sustained a sad loss in killed and *hors de combat*.

Now came the difficulty—and how to get away without being seen. Fortunately we found a pathway shrouded by small trees, which we passed by single files, without uttering a word. On clearing it, to say that we did not feel glad would be a piece of unnecessary affectation. The men were covered with mud and sweat, and their faces and hands blackened by the biting of cartridges; and scarcely a round of ammunition remained in the pouches. The sergeant, who had been rather dragged than carried out of the wood, was lying on his back and still alive, with his eyes closed, perfectly black, and swelled up as large as a couple of cricket balls; he was frothing at the mouth, and presenting a horrible sight. The balls were again whizzing past our ears, and while spreading the blanket out of his knapsack over his trembling and agitated body, one of the soldiers said "He cannot live long," when, strange to relate, he raised his arm and waved a pocket hand-

kerchief crimsoned with gore which he held in his hand!

An officer full of ardor came forward from the regiment to cover some of the skirmishers on the left; but he was soon shot through the leg, and the sergeant major into the bargain. The latter was a fine comely handsome man of about fourteen stone weight, who was now mounted on a soldier's back with his sword drawn, swearing all the oaths he could muster; and the sight was so ludicrous, that we were all convulsed with laughter, to see the two heroes, who had come quite fresh to cover our retreat, carried off the field in so droll a manner,—while now and then a stray bullet whistled through the air, by way of a hint that it was no joke.

Our line of picquets was now advanced; which, I am quite confident, might have been accomplished without a shot being fired. In the evening we returned to the village of Arbonne with keen appetites, and heartily glad to wash the dirt and mire from off our hands and faces.

CHAPTER VI.

Tolerable quarters—Beguiling of time on picquet duty—The army again in motion—A critical position—French cunning, and occasional politeness—Skirmishing affairs preceding the battle of the Nive—Details of that engagement—Its advantageous consequences to our army—Acts of complaisance between the vanguards of the opposed forces—Christmas festivities.

THE weather continued variable, intermixed with cold winds, sleet, and heavy rains. However, as we were pretty well housed, the hardships of other campaigns ceased, for we had no longer fatiguing marches, the rations were regularly served out, and, as long as our money lasted, the hordes of congregated suttlers at Saint Jean de Luz supplied us in abundance with every article of domestic comfort. When on picquet, our time was occupied chattering with the peasantry, a sort of *demi-basque* tribe. They had no decided costume :

the females twisted striped handkerchiefs of various patterns round their heads according to the French custom, and wore wooden shoes or *sabots*,—an article well adapted to keep out the mud in the execrable roads of this country.

On the 9th of December the army was put in motion, and the second division forded the river near Cambo, with little opposition from the enemy. Our division advanced against the French in front of Bassussary, and drove in some of their picquets; while the left under General Hope advanced on the road leading from St. Jean de Luz, nearly up to the entrenched camp in front of Bayonne. During the whole day a good deal of desultory skirmishing took place, and our army formed a sort of half-circle, the river Nive cutting through the right centre, which made the distance from right to left at least twenty miles, by roads scarcely passable. Towards evening the left of the army retired to their former line of picquets, and the main body to Saint Jean de Luz and its environs; but our division kept its ground more than half a mile in front of the village of Arcan-gues. The enemy seemed determined not to quit the fortified house near the little bridge, or Pont d'Urdains, and as we passed north of it, we had overlooked its enclosure, occupied by a French brigade, congregated in a noisy assemblage, while

their rations were served out. Apprehensive that the sight of the loaves and wine casks might excite us to desperate expedients, one or two hundred of the enemy's tirailleurs extended themselves, and advanced, without much firing, to clear the ground.

After dark our sentinels were withdrawn, for the purpose of taking post on our original picquet ground. The company I commanded held a small promontory, or tongue of land, which jutted out considerably beyond all the other line of picquets; and, without doubt, was a most precarious post, as neither flank was secure: and the sentinels were planted on a half-circle, to shield the main body of the picquet. Notwithstanding the ground was so disadvantageous, it was necessary to hold it, as it commanded the debouché of the road from Bayonne by Bassussary. During the night we heard confused sounds, like the rumbling of artillery, intermixed with a good deal of hallooing and barking of dogs; but two hours before daybreak all the sounds died away, and every thing was hushed and tranquil. The suspicion, however, of the field officer of the picquets was awakened, and he ordered me to feel my way towards the house of Oyhenart usually held by the French, to ascertain whether they had taken up the ground from which they had been driven on

the previous day. Four soldiers accompanied me, but, as good luck would have it, I could not pass the *abattis*, composed of trees, which had been cut down to stop up the broad road, and to cover our picquet-house.

We then crossed into a field, and, stealing along close to the right of the road, as cautiously as possible, waited the French sentinels' well-known *qui vive*. Suddenly I felt the serjeant pulling at the skirts of my jacket, (for I had thrown off my cloak as an incumbrance,) and he whispered me to cast my eyes to the left, where I saw about a dozen Frenchmen, within six yards of us, gliding along the road towards our *abattis*, I think, without shoes, for they did not make the least noise. A small hedge screened us; the serjeant was about to fire, but I put his fusee down with my hand, and we all squatted in the mud, anxiously awaiting the result. Time hung on leaden wings, and they were almost entangled in the branches of the felled trees before our sentry discovered and challenged them; but not being quite certain of the cause of the slight noise, he did not fire, and presently these grey-coated phantom-looking figures came running past us, with noiseless footsteps: we then made good haste back, having been, according to our calculation, within ten or twelve yards of their sentry, who was

usually planted behind a hedge which flanked their picquet-house, distant from ours two hundred yards.

At daybreak, on the 10th December, we perceived the advance of the enemy within one hundred yards of our picquet, loitering about as usual, without any outward display of any thing extraordinary going on, or any signs indicating that they were about to assume offensive movements. At eight o'clock, Sir James Kempt came to my picquet-house, and, having seated himself by the fire, the assembled party consisted of Lieut. Col. Beckwith (a staff officer) of the Rifle Corps, Lieut. Col. William Napier, Major Sir John Tylden, Lieut. Maclean*, and the Honorable C. Monck, of our regiment, who all entered into an indifferent conversation, without contemplating that an attack was meditated by the enemy. Lieut. Col. Napier remarked, that he thought the French loiterers seemed very busy, which induced us to approach the window, which commanded a full view of the enemy's picquet-house, and having looked at them some time, without seeing the cause of alarm, some of the party burst into a loud laugh, and declared that it was only Napier's fancy; but he still persisted, and would

* Now Captain Maclean.

not give up his point, saying, that he had seen them very often before, in a like manner, walking off by ones and twos, to assemble at given points, before making some rapid and simultaneous assault; and, sure enough, before the expiration of half an hour, these ones and twos increased considerably all along the hedges.

Although Sir James Kempt was always on the alert, (no general could be more so,) still he persisted that nothing would take place, and ordered the first brigade to return to its quarters at Arbonne, a distance of more than two miles, and over a very bad road. Lieut.-Col. Beckwith remarked, that he now agreed that the French seemed to be eyeing the post, and advised Sir James to rescind the order, as it would be better to conceal the troops, and to wait until the enemy should develop their intentions. The field-officer rode off to warn the other companies in advance to be in readiness. These were formed disadvantageously, on a gentle concave acclivity, which could not be helped, from the nature and shape of the country.

Lieut.-Col. Beckwith alone remained, and, before he rode off, walked round the sentinels with me, as I was ordered to defend the post, should the enemy come on, to oblige them fully to develop their intentions. Shortly after this, one

of the sentinels stationed on the most rising ground, turned his back to the French and beckoned me. On my reaching his post, he informed me that he had seen a mountain-gun brought on a mule's back, and placed behind a bush. In a few minutes the Duke of Dalmatia, with about forty staff officers, came within point-blank range of my picquet to reconnoitre the ground. During this interval, I fancied that I could hear the buzz of voices behind a small hillock, and, on clambering a fruit-tree near my picquet-house, I could just descry a column of the enemy lying down, in readiness to pounce on us. There being no longer any doubt that they were about to attack, I instantly mounted my horse, (leaving the company in charge of the next senior officer,) and rode at full speed in search of the general, whom I met within a quarter of a mile, and told him there would be a general action fought that day, and there was no time to be lost. Sir James Kempt ordered me to send a mounted officer from the picquet to Gen. Baron C. Alten, and to be sure not to begin the firing until the very last moment. He sent also the greater part of another company to my assistance. In two or three minutes after I had returned to the picquet, some French soldiers, headed by an officer, issued from behind the hedges, and moved round our

left flank, within one hundred yards. The officer naturally thought we should fire at him ; therefore, to feign indifference, he placed his telescope to his eye, looked carelessly about in all directions, and made a bow to us. Further to the left, we could also see a body of French cavalry debouching from the small thicket of la Bourdique, three miles distant, near the great Bayonne road.

The French soldiers, witnessing our civility to their small party, were determined not to be outdone in *politesse*, and called out to our sentinels to retire, in French and Spanish. At half-past nine o'clock, A. M., the enemy's skirmishers, in groups, came forward in a careless manner, talking to each other, and good-naturedly allowed our sentinels to retire without firing on them. They imagined, from their superiority of numbers, to gain this post by a *coup de main* ; and the more effectually by this means to surprise, if possible, the whole line of out-posts. However, when they were within twenty yards of our abattis, I said, " Now fire away."* The first discharge did great execution. These were the first shots fired, and the beginning of the battle of the *Nive*. The enemy then debouched from

* Probably such a word of command may astonish *some adjutant-major*, but I give it as it occurred : in rough ground, in rough times, and in a rough country, such expedients are resorted to in war.

behind the thickets in crowds; our flanks were turned right and left, and the brisk French voltigeurs rushed impetuously forward, (covered by two mountain-guns,) blowing their trumpets, and shouting "*En avant, en avant Français; vive l'Empereur!*"

The atmosphere was clouded, and the bright flashing and pelting of musketry sprang up with amazing rapidity. One of our companies, having held its ground too long in front of the village of Arcangues, was surrounded. The officer commanding it, asked the soldiers if they would charge to the rear, and they rushed into the village with such a loud huzza, that an officer commanding a French regiment was so surprised at their sudden appearance, as to halt the column for a few moments; and the fugitives sprang across the single street and escaped.

Two battalions of the rifle corps being formed in columns of grand divisions, or single companies, behind the various houses, developed their skirmishers in admirable order, and fought in and round the scattered houses of Chau with great skill. So close was the combat, that Lieut. Hopwood and a serjeant of the rifle corps, were both shot through the head by a single Frenchman putting the muzzle of his piece quite close to them, while they were engaged with others in front.

In the meantime the whole of our picquets now

ceased firing and retired leisurely, unengaged, took their station with the rest of the regiment, and formed in a churchyard, on our main position, more than half a mile behind the village of Arcangues,* a sort of neutral post for reserve picquets; but the village was not entrenched, was not intended to be defended, and formed no part of our main position, owing to the ground on both flanks of it being badly adapted for defence. The isolated church and the château called Arcangues, have been the cause of those numerous mistakes made relatively to the distant village of that name being the supposed scene of a severe conflict. The rest of the brigade already lined the breast-work of a château, two hundred yards to the right.

After a protracted struggle the rifle corps retired, and formed on the position marked out for defence, but left a number of skirmishers behind some stone walls, at the bottom of the slope, from which the enemy could never dislodge them,

* On assembling in the church-yard behind Arcangues, an athletic soldier of this company being without his knapsack, told us, that while passing through the village three French soldiers had surrounded him, and one had hold of his collar; but he throwing his knapsack on the ground, knocked one man down, and the others seized his knapsack, and by this means he effected his escape.

owing to our overpowering fire from the high ground.

The second brigade was now sharply engaged, having been in echelon to our left and obliquely to the rear, following the undulating nature of the ground. The plateau of Arcangues and Bassussarry being gained by the enemy, now became the pivot of the French marshal's operations, which enabled his right wing to attack the fifth division, on the high road to St. Jean de Luz, where there was some very hard fighting, in front of the batteries; and it was some hours before the first division and Lord Aylmer's brigade could come to their assistance, these troops having been peaceably in their quarters, and far to the rear, when this sudden irruption took place. The enemy's attack ceased opposite to us, with the exception of a firing of artillery within about a thousand yards, which continued to play into the church-yard, and knocked about the tombstones during the greater part of the day. In one spot a small green mound was carried away, and also the lid of an infant's coffin, leaving the putrid remains of the child exposed to view. However, we kept up an incessant discharge of small-arms, which so annoyed the French gunners, that, during the latter part of the day, they ceased to molest us. The walls of the stone

church were cannon-proof; I saw many balls break large pieces out of the edifice, and fall harmlessly on the sod.

The assembled enemy on the neighbouring heights seemed now to meditate an assault. Two companies lined the interior of the building, the windows of which were surrounded with wooden galleries; water was taken into the church, and a strong traverse was erected opposite the door, so that, if by any accident the enemy had attacked and gained possession of it, the fire from the galleries would have driven them out again.

The rest of the battalion were stationed behind a stone-wall, which encircled the church-yard, and in reserve behind the edifice, ready to make a charge of bayonets should the enemy succeed in breaking through this enclosure. Their advance were stationed behind a house, within two hundred yards of us, covered by their cannon at the brow of the hill, while we only possessed two mountain three-pounders, which were placed to the left of the church, to fire down a narrow lane which threatened our left flank. For some days previously, trifling working parties had been employed, of twenty or thirty men, in cutting down a small plantation in front of the church, which was so intersected by the trees entangled together, that the enemy never could have pene-

trated them; but the other entrenchments consisted of a few shovels of earth, negligently thrown up, which the French voltigeurs might have hopped over; and as for flank defences, they seemed not to have been thought of.

At about one o'clock, P. M., the fourth division came to our support, and crowned a hill six hundred yards behind the château occupied by the rifle corps.

During the night the whole of our regiment were hard at work, in throwing up a formidable battery in front of the church-yard, and before morning it was finished, with embrasures, regular *épaulements*, (filled up with small bushes, to make the enemy believe that it was a masked battery,) and traverses. Both our flanks were secured by felled trees, strewed about, and even at the back of the burial-ground, which was now impregnable against any sudden assault; nor do I believe six thousand men could have taken it. So much for the ingenuity of infantry soldiers, with their spades, shovels, pickaxes, bill-hooks, and hatchets.

On the 11th, it was supposed that the Duke of Dalmatia intended to break the centre, by advancing against the church and château, (commonly called Arcangues); accordingly General Hope detached the right part of his force

nearer to the left of our division ; but the enemy again attacked, and obliged him to resume his original ground, where there was a good deal of firing, and many brave men fell on both sides, without any decided result. During this day, although the French advance was quite close to us, there was no firing ; and we industriously profited by every moment of tranquillity to strengthen our position. At this juncture, two battalions of Nassau troops deserted into the British lines.

On the 12th, a fusillade on the left continued the greater part of the day ; every now and then there was a cessation of small-arms ; then a sudden rush and burst of firing, and so on. On calling the roll in the afternoon, a dozen men of our regiment were missing, and an officer being sent with a patrol to a small house enclosed in an apple-orchard, he found the enemy's soldiers and our men mixed together, in a room full of apples. The French soldiers, considering themselves prisoners, brought forth the whole of their apples as a peace offering to the officer, who merely pointed to the door, from whence they effected their escape ; while, on the other hand, the culprits belonging to us were brought back, with downcast heads, and their havresacks crammed with apples.

In the evening the enemy formed a strong mass of troops, within cannon range, and in front of our second brigade, but made no further movement; while those opposite to us were employed in throwing up the earth, as if to construct batteries. During the night, some of the rifle corps on picquet, being close to the French, observed, by the reflection of a bright fire, about thirty stand of the enemy's firelocks piled in front of their picquet-house, which the rifles determined to possess themselves of, and darted forward with such rapidity that the French sentinel had only time to discharge his piece and run away. The rest of the picquet bolted the front, and escaped, without arms, by the back door.

On the 13th, in the morning, it was found that the French Marshal had disappeared from our front, and during the night had again marched in a half-circle through Bayonne, for the purpose of attacking the second division before sufficient support or assistance could be given them, finding the three previous days' fighting and demonstrations had failed to force the lines, or oblige Field Marshal Wellington to withdraw his right flank from the right bank of the Nive.

The sixth and third divisions supported the right of the army; the fourth division the centre; and

the seventh the left centre: these four divisions being in reserve, and occasionally in motion towards those points threatened.

The company I commanded was again for out-post duty, at the identical spot which we had been driven from. We relieved a company of the rifle corps which had felt its way, *au point du jour*, to our old picquet-house. The officer whom I relieved, in a merry mood, bade us good morning, and pointed, at the same time, towards the French infantry, with knapsacks on, bayonets fixed, and aided by a squadron of hussars. The old *abattis* had been entirely removed, and as it was quite uncertain at what moment the enemy might make a forward movement, I ordered another *abattis* to be constructed at the turn of the road; and I never saw the men work with better humour. In a few minutes a sufficient number of trees were cut down, and collected, to stop any sudden ebullition of the cavalry; it would have been any thing but agreeable to be attacked on both flanks, while the dragoons charged up the road.

This little defence was barely finished, when some straggling shots took place in front of General Hill's corps, occupying a concave position of about four miles in extent, between the rivers Adour and Nive; the right centre occupying the

village of St. Jean vieux Monguerre. The day was fine, and in a short time the white smoke ascended in clouds, amidst peals of musketry, and the rapid and well-served artillery. The battle was well contested on both sides, and there was no break in the musketry. Both bodies fought as if this struggle was to wind up, in brilliant style, the battle of the Nive. As fast as the grape-shot mowed down, and split the enemy's columns, they again closed up, and strenuously endeavoured to break through the brave lines of the second division, who repulsed all their attacks, and crowned the day by forcing the enemy into their entrenchments with such decision, that they no more resumed the offensive, nor was the army further disturbed by petty affairs.

The right of the French army now confined itself to the usual out-posts in front of Bayonne; its right centre extended on the right of the Adour to Port de Lanne, and its left flank on the right bank of the river Bidouze, and their cavalry filled up the intermediate country as far as the small fortress of Saint Jean Pied de Port, which position embraced our army, and formed two sides of a square,—our right face being on the river Joyeuse, and supported by the light cavalry.

Various acts of complaisance now passed be-

tween the vanguards of the hostile armies. A lady from Bayonne, with a skipping poodle dog, one day came to see *les habits rouges* of *les Anglais*; and while she was going through those little elegancies, so peculiarly characteristic of the French, the poodle dog came towards us, and from an over officiousness, some of the French soldiers whistled to keep it within bounds, which so frightened the little creature, that at full speed it entered our lines, and crouched at our feet. Without a moment's delay we sent it back by a soldier to its anxious mistress, who was highly delighted, and with her own delicate hand presented a goblet of wine to the man, who, with an unceremonious nod, quaffed the delicious beverage to the dregs, touched his cap, and rejoined us, with a pipe in his mouth and a store of tobacco,—the latter having been presented to him by the French soldiers.

With the exception of a trifling change of quarters, and a few other occurrences, the year closed without any thing to interrupt our little Christmas festivities, which were always kept in due form. On Christmas-day I was on picquet, but we partook of the usual fare, and some mulled wine, with as much tranquillity as if afar removed from hostile alarms. Just before dark, while

passing a corporal's picquet, an officer and myself stood for a few minutes, to contemplate a poor woman, who had brought her little pudding, and her child, from her distant quarters, to partake of it with her husband, by the side of a small fire kindled under a tree.

CHAPTER V.

An unproductive alarm—The Duke d'Angoulême visits the British army—Orders received by the Duke of Dalmatia—General position of Napoleon's affairs—The author visits Bera on leave of absence—Remarks on the mischiefs committed by camp followers—A scene for contemplation—The author's friends at Bera—Love inimical to harmony—Return to quarters—Movements for penetrating into the interior of France—The author's regiment enters St. Palais, crosses the Gave, and passes through Sauveterre to Orthes.

On the 3rd of January, 1814, a slight affair took place on the river Joyeuse, which caused the army to be put in motion. Our division crossed the Nive by the bridge of Ustaritz, made a day's march and encamped; but nothing further of consequence taking place, we repassed the left of the river, and resumed our old cantonments, in the scattered villas, farm-houses, and cottages about the village of Arrauntz. During this month the Duke d'Angoulême took up

his abode with the British army at St. Jean de Luz.

The Duke of Dalmatia received an order to detach from Bayonne a large portion of his force of cavalry, artillery and infantry to the succour of Napoleon, who, since his disastrous campaign in Russia, had slowly retrograded through Germany, and after fighting many mighty battles, had been forced to recross the Rhine into France, and was now endeavouring with skeleton numbers, by a series of skilful manœuvres, combats and diplomacy, to preserve the throne against a host of invaders directed personally by the three crowned heads of Europe, whose banners were at last nailed together and threatening *la ville de Paris*. There Maria-Louisa, with her infant son by her side, was issuing bulletins announcing the partial successes gained by Napoleon her husband, over the troops of her father, the Emperor Francis of Austria, the Czar of Russia, and the King of Prussia. Such was the state of events at this momentous epoch—Great Britain still continuing the focus of resistance, and straining every nerve to keep the Holy Alliance unanimous. .

The weather now became very severe, and as some reports were circulated that there was a probability of the British army advancing into the in-

terior of France, I obtained a few days' leave for the purpose of visiting my wounded friends at Bera; and accordingly I set off in the direction of Saint Jean de Luz. A severe frost had hardened the roads, and the ground was covered with snow, but I had scarcely travelled a league, when I heard an independent firing towards Bayonne, which almost induced me to return, under the apprehension, that some portion of the army were engaged; but, on reaching a more elevated hill, I found that none of the troops were in motion, and it afterwards turned out to be the young French conscripts practising at targets. On this open heath, signal posts were erected, to communicate with the right of the army, on the right bank of the Nive. Batteries were thrown up a few miles in front of Saint Jean de Luz, to cover that town on the high road from Bayonne. They appeared strong and well finished.

The narrow and dirty streets of Saint Jean de Luz presented a gloomy aspect, being filled with muleteers, cars loaded with biscuit-bags, bullocks, rum-casks, ammunition, idlers, and all the disagreeable incumbrances attached to the rear of an army. As I passed along the high road, I felt exceedingly surprised at the numerous delapidated houses, and empty chateaux, with the orchards and all the fruit trees cut down and con-

verted into *abattis*, which had been done by the French army; but every article that had been left by them in good order, the followers of our army had ransacked. How often do the soldiers of armies bear the odium of enormities and plunderings, committed most frequently by the non-combatant wolves in the shape of men, whose crimes are of such long standing, and so frequently executed (under the cloak of night, or under the mask of hypocrisy), that at last no atrocity is too heinous for so cowardly a banditti to commit. They devour the rations on their way to the hungry army: they steal the officers' horses: they extort exorbitant prices for small articles, which they have stolen from the peaceful inhabitants: they strip the deserted and expiring wounded on the field of battle, and would willingly sell their bodies, could they find purchasers.

Having jogged along some miles, amongst this horde of scattered ruffians, I came to the narrow road turning off to the left, which leads across the mountains to the town of Bera; and towards evening I reached, with difficulty, the summit of the contracted pass, narrowed by the drifted, and frozen snow. Here I stopped for a few minutes, (notwithstanding the piercing coldness of the frosty air) to contemplate the town of Bera, and

the scattered *quintas* embosomed in the valley, now wrapped in a *death-like stillness*, and covered, as well as the surrounding mountains, with snow. The brittle branches of the trees were stiffened, fringed, and sparkling with icicles. A few short months had produced a great change ! When last I had been at this spot, the foliage was tinted with an autumnal hue, and red lines of soldiers, were formed there, their silken and embroidered ensigns waving, and their bright arms gleaming in the rays of the sun, the craggy heights bristled with bayonets, the drums beating, the merry bugle horns echoing throughout the winding vallies : every eminence was crowned with curling smoke, the vivid firing of small arms, or the occasional flash of the cannon, reverberating amid the forests in hollow caves, broken chasms, and fissures of the granite rock,—producing sounds afar off, like the rumbling of distant thunder,—and altogether giving an inconceivable life, and animation to the scenery.

On my descending from this pinnacle, to make my way down the side of the mountain, the road was so blocked up with snow, the narrow pathway in the middle so slippery, and the foot-hold so uncertain, that I could hardly keep myself on my legs, or the animal on its own ; and, resting every now and then, I did not reach the solitary

and deserted street of the town, until an hour and a half after nightfall.

When opposite to the porch of the well known Casa, (that of the before-mentioned Spanish family), although shivering and benumbed with cold, I hesitated to knock for admittance. All was dark and silent; no lights issued from the casement, nor was the sound of any voice to be heard from within. In this short interval, many conjectures rushed across my mind; my friends might be gone to some distant town; the former hospitable inmates might no longer inhabit its gloomy walls, it might be occupied with strangers, or be the sanctuary of the dead. With such dismal forebodings, I gave a thundering rap; the massive door was opened by a soldier, holding a little iron lamp in his hand, (filled with *aceyte*, and having a small wick burning at the spout) which cast a faint glimmering light across the out lines of my cloak, and wiry-haired steed, covered with slakes of snow. Without waiting for any explanation, the man was hastily closing the door, while lustily calling out, "There is no room here, this house is full of wounded officers;" but on making myself known, the portal was thrown back on its hinges; lights appeared at the top of the stairs, and the voices of my friends joyfully greeted my arrival. In the midst of our embrac-

ings, "Take care of my side," said one of them, (still hugging me), "for it has sloughed away, and you shall see my bare ribs anon." Another was stretched on his pallet, from which he had not risen for upwards of two months, but was slowly recovering under the soothing attention, and gentle hand of la Señorita Ventura. The former had made too free with the roseate wine at Christmas, which had caused his wound to break out anew, leaving his ribs quite bare of flesh for the space of six inches in diameter; but they were both in excellent spirits—the *braceiro* was replenished with ruddy embers, and placed at my feet, and a hot dinner speedily served up, with a bottle of sparkling wine to solace and comfort my inside, after my freezing journey. Over this we recounted all that had passed since our separation at the battle of the Nivelle. I described fresh battles, and combats, and they all the torments they had endured while slowly carried two leagues in blankets up and down the rocks and mountains, or on the verge of terrific precipices, in momentary dread that those supporting them might slip, and let them fall on the jagged and naked rocks. Before I retired to rest, I paid a visit to a young officer of the 52nd regiment, who occupied a room at the upper part of the house; he was suffering

dreadfully, and dying from a wound which he had received in the groin.

The following day, Captain Smith of the 20th regiment dined with us, who came from the neighbourhood of Roncesvalles, bringing in his train a coffin, and having performed a pilgrimage, through the intricacies of the mountains at this inclement season of the year, in search of a friend, who had been killed in that neighbourhood five months before. Three or four days passed in this manner, when a trifling circumstance broke up our sociable conviviality. The last evening, as we were seated round the *braceiro*, I was engaged in an agreeable tête-à-tête with *la Señorita Ventura* which seriously affected one of my wounded friends, who was deeply enamoured of her; he continued, however, to smother his anguish for a short time, and the strangeness of his manner, left little doubt on my mind that an excuse would only make bad worse, on so delicate a subject. I therefore announced the intention of taking my departure on the following morning. One of them held me by the collar, and declared I should not go, as I had introduced them to the family, and that any jealous feeling was the height of ingratitude; however, the blow was so injurious to my friend's

vanity or love, that he could not endure my presence for another evening ; twice, by such introductions, I had almost saved his life, yet he could not forgive, although an excellent fellow. Such is all-powerful love !

Having bidden adieu, myself and a friend of the rifles (who had been to Bera to see his wounded brother) repassed Saint-Jean de Luz, and soon after alighted at the quarters of a commissary, who had formerly belonged to the light division. While we were partaking of some refreshment, he asked us whether the division had not been surprised on the 10th of the last December ; when told to the contrary, he assured us that it was generally supposed to be the case, and he was exceedingly glad to hear it contradicted, feeling an interest in all that concerned the welfare of the division, for he had made his *débüt* with it. Before leaving the main road, the same questions were put to us in another quarter, by an officer who had been previously in our own corps ; which will give a faint idea how rapidly evil and malicious reports fly ; and so evil a one as this I had seldom known hatched. However, looking to the front, we only fancied ourselves on the high road of blunders ; but the most curious and laughable part of the business was, that these very reports were in

circulation by those who were so far to the rear when the battle of the Nive first began, that, had it not been for the determined resistance of the van guards of the light* and fifth divisions, the enemy would have passed all the defences, and most probably seized Saint Jean de Luz, and the bridge at Ustaritz ;—and strange it is, but not less true, that the most doleful accounts float about behind an army: victory is construed into defeat; and if a slight retrograde is made, off go the non-combatants as hard as they can tear, carrying away every one in the torrent whom they can persuade to take their friendly advice.

A thaw had now set in; the cross roads, in many places, were perfect bogs and quagmires, so that we did not reach our cantonments until late at night, and were covered with mud, having been frequently obliged to dismount, to wade through the slough, before we dared trust our horses to pass through, as many animals were still sticking or lying in the liquid mud, after having floundered about until they were smothered in the mire.

* The reserves of the light division were not brought into action, but manned the main position, in case of its being attacked, which did not take place—while the main body of the army awoke from its slumbers and came to the battle-ground.

Preparations being made, early in February, for pushing into the interior of France, General Hill broke up from Bayonne in the middle of that month, and at first moved in a southerly direction as far as Hellete, driving the enemy across the rivers Joyeuse, Bidouze, and through the town of St. Palais.* These movements cut the French off from the small fortress of St. Jean Pied-de-Port, which General Mina blockaded, and obliged the right of their army to leave Bayonne to its own defence. Thence, marching along the right bank of the Adour, they crossed the river at the Port de Lanne, for the purpose of supporting their centre and left, which were retiring before General Hill, and taking post behind the river or Gave d'Oleron, with their right resting on the left bank of the Adour, and occupying the towns of Peyrehorade, Sauveterre, and the small fortress of Navarriens.

The six divisions of the army, besides cavalry and artillery, destined to penetrate into the interior, consisted of the *second, third, fourth, sixth, seventh, and light divisions*, which were now

* All the above towns, including Bayonne, in September 1807, had been occupied by the French troops under General Junot (afterwards Duke of Abrantes) previously to their entrance into Spain under the plea of uniting with the Spaniards for the invasion of Portugal.

extending in echelon from Vieux Mouguerre to Navarriens and drawing off by degrees in succession towards the right : the *first* and *fifth division*, Lord Alymer's brigade, and a corps of Spaniards being left behind to blockade the fortress of Bayonne under General Hope.

Our division, having passed the Nive, occupied the small town of Bastide ; but, as the clothing of our regiment had reached as far as the town of Ustaritz, we once more crossed the river for it, and having halted there one day, retraced our steps to rejoin the army, the right of which had crossed the Gave d'Oleron, while General Beresford with two divisions showed front, ready to cross that river at Peyrehorade.

The right of General Hope's corps, consisting of the fifth division, having crossed to the right of the river Nive, invested Bayonne on that side. On the 23rd, part of the first division passed the Adour, (two hundred and seventy yards in width) on a raft four miles below Bayonne, from whence the enemy advanced to endeavour to force this small van-guard to recross the river, but without effect. The two following days, the whole of the first division were ferried over to the right bank of the river : Lord Alymer's brigade, and the Spaniards in reserve hemmed in the enemy on the side of St. Jean de Luz, which completed the

lines of circumvallation, drawn round the entrenched camp of this fortress and its citadel: but, owing to the intersection of the rivers, this corps was split into *three* different bodies, communicating with each other by the grand bridge of Chasse-Marées,* thrown over the Adour, and one across the Nive. Subsequently some changes of the troops took place.

On the 25th our regiment reached a village within a mile of St. Palais, and on the following morning entered that town, when, to our mortification, we were ordered to halt until relieved by some other regiment, while the 57th, whom we had replaced, marched forward to join the army. It was therefore evident that the troops were left to keep open the line of communication in rear of the army, as well as to fetch clothing.

On the morning of the 27th we heard that the 79th Highlanders were to enter the town; we therefore got under arms, and as soon as they entered at one end, we marched out at the other

* The sailors of Admiral Penrose's squadron assisted in boldly running these boats over the bar at the mouth of the Adour (where some of them and crews were unfortunately lost) for the purpose of forming the famous bridge of boats across that river. Admiral Collier also co-operated with the crews of his squadron in landing cannon, and working them in battery at St. Sebastian.

and towards the middle of the day passed the Gave d'Oleron,* at Sauveterre. A fine stone bridge crossed the river; but its centre arches had been blown up and entirely destroyed: it was therefore necessary to ford the river, which was more than a hundred yards in breadth; and, although hardly three feet deep below the bridge, the current was so extremely rapid, and the bottom so intersected with loose stones, that it was thought advisable for the strongest men to throw off their knapsacks, and to join hands and form a strong chain with their faces to the current, to pick up any of the soldiers, who might chance to turn giddy or loose their foot-hold—for if an individual wavered to either side, the probability was, that he was whirled round by the force of the stream, and lifted off his legs, sinking to the bottom like a lump of lead, loaded as he was, with knapsack, accoutrements and sixty pounds of ball cartridge!

We breakfasted at a hotel in the town of Sauveterre, and, as the band played through it, the in-

* Near this spot, a few days before, some light companies of the third division had forded; but they had no sooner crossed than they were violently attacked by the enemy, and forced to repass it under a heavy fire, losing many brave soldiers killed and drowned, before a sufficient force could cross to their support.

habitants stood at their windows smiling with as much indifference, as if the column had been composed of the native troops of their own country.

At this time we could distinctly hear, at some distance to our front, a heavy firing, and the rolling of musketry and cannon. Owing to its continuation we marched forward the whole of the day. The country was extremely fertile, with large farm houses and chateaux on each side of the road. All the doors were closed, nor did we meet a single individual, from whom we could gain the least information. Towards dusk the howling of the great watch-dogs might be heard all over the country; and although we bivouacked in the night in a wood, within three miles of Orthes, we were utterly ignorant of the cause of the heavy firing during the day.

At dawn on the 28th we had hardly traversed a mile when we observed the tents of the 57th regiment pitched on the top of a hill, to the right of the road, without any signs of a move. This corps had been two days from St. Palais, and in one march we were passing them. I was sent forward to gain information, and absolutely reached the old narrow bridge on the river Pau at Orthes, before I heard from an officer of engineers, who was superintending its repairs, that a battle had taken place on the previous day. The cen-

tre arch being destroyed, this officer had strict orders not to let any one pass it, until it should be fully repaired: however, as an especial favour, he had the complaisance to cause a few planks to be laid down, and, at a great risk, I succeeded in getting my horse over and entered the town—where I met a soldier of the 52nd, who could not tell me the road the light division had taken after the victory, and, when asked what they had been doing the day before: “Why sir,” replied he, “I never saw Johnny fight better.” Directly after this I saw Lord George Lennox, in a light dragoon uniform, who told me, that he feared his brother the Duke of Richmond,* a Captain of the 52nd, was mortally wounded, having been shot through the body by a musket ball, while ascending a hill with his regiment, at the close of the battle.

* Then Earl of March; he had been on Field-Marshal Wellington's staff for some time previously, and only joined his regiment a short time before this action.

CHAPTER VI.

A wrong direction—An affair with the enemy's cavalry—Bivouac in a wood—A ludicrous mistake in the dark—Arrival at St. Sever—Welcome supply of bread—The Duke of Dalmatia leaves Bordeaux unprotected, to preserve the communication with Toulouse—Reception of the English at Mont de Marsan—A dancing scene and other amusements at the village of Brinquet—The disappointed purveyors—The author regains his corps—Adventure gained over the enemy by General Hill—Gascon peasantry—Various movements of the opposed armies—The French driven through the town of Vic Bigorre—An agreeable march.

It was now eight o'clock in the morning, and finding little probability of gaining the requisite intelligence of the route of the light division, without seeing the adjutant-general, I made direct to his *maison*, and, being ushered up stairs, I found him in bed, comfortably-reposing with the curtains drawn tightly round him. Whether he was half asleep from over-fatigue, or from some other cause, he gave me the route of the *fourth* division, by the road leading towards the town of Sault de Navailles.

On overtaking the tail of that division, we fell into a slow pace, owing to some obstacles and the broken bridges over the various tributary streams, which were very much swollen at this time of the year.

On this day, our hussars had an affair beyond Sault de Navailles with the enemy's cavalry ; and, in the afternoon, I saw one of their officers on horseback, deadly pale from a wound in the abdomen.

After nightfall, we bivouacked in a wood to the right of the high road on the river Louts, within a short way of the town of Hagetman. Our baggage did not come up ; the night was miserably cold, and the whole of the officers of our regiment took possession of a tumble-down shed, or forsaken cow-house, where, having spread out some stalks of Indian corn, some of us began to roast potatoes, when an aid-de-camp, appertaining to a General, came up to the door-way (for *door* there was none), and said, halloo ! halloo ! who's here ? who's here ? when one of our majors coolly replied, " Officers and pigs," which created a general laugh ; and the General sent elsewhere to put up his horses.—In the middle of the night, one of the officers, having suddenly awoke out of his sleep, called out with all his might, " come up, come up,"

fancying that a French cart-horse had got amongst us. A ludicrous scene took place—every one for himself! till at last a heap of living heroes were piled together, each scrambling on the top of the other, and all bawling out “lights! lights!” At last, by main strength, I managed to extricate myself from a pressure nearly as bad as that in the black hole of Calcutta. The soldiers and servants, hearing such a hullabaloo, flocked into the hut, which added to, rather than diminished the disorder of the scene. At length a lighted wisp of straw being brought in, every one stared about, with the greatest astonishment; for the object of terror had vanished, or rather had not appeared. Some crawled out from their hiding places, demanding who had taken away the horse, while the respectful and confounded servants protested, one after the other, that they had not seen a horse, nor taken any away. The alarm took place from some one kicking against the shed, which was mistaken, by the officer who created the alarm, for the hoofs of a horse shod by a French farrier, within an ace of his head! Sleep was banished, and roars of laughter continued throughout the rest of the night.

On the 29th, we got under arms very early, to give the two divisions the “go by;” but our movements had been anticipated, and we received

strict injunctions not to stir from our ground, but to follow in the rear, as on the preceding day. We, therefore, again found ourselves creeping along the road as before. When we were within four miles of the river Adour, Field-Marshal Wellington rode up (he had received a blow on the hip from a spent ball at the battle of Orthes, while directing the last attack on the heights,) and said, "Forty-third, what do you do here?" upon which the senior officer told the Field-Marshal that the officer commanding the column would not let us pass. In the short space of ten minutes, the whole of the troops in our front were halted, and we marched forward, and soon after ascended a hill, and formed column in the grand place of the town of St. Sever, immediately overlooking the left bank of the river Adour. Here we found a baker's oven full of hot bread, which a commissary (with a *val* in his hand,) had laid an embargo on; and it was with the utmost favour that we were permitted to purchase a few loaves, or rather, having taken forcible possession, we were permitted to retain the bread, paying for the same; as they might have found an attempt at a re-capture rather a difficult matter from men suffering from hunger, and out of humour, on a cold hazy spring morning. To whom the bread was afterwards served out I cannot pretend to say.

The rear divisions, with drums beating, were passing near the town, and at last increased into a dense column, while forming up opposite the *wooden bridge*, which the enemy had set fire to. As soon as the flames were got under, and ladders placed close together to facilitate the passage of the infantry, General Sir Thomas Picton, with his usual ardour, pushed forward his division, the head of which crowded the ladders with all haste.

Our regiment now debouched from the town, with orders to cross, and Lieut.-Col. Ross's brigade of horse-artillery forded the river below the bridge, to accompany us, for the purpose of taking possession of the stores in the populous town of Mont de Marsan, distant twelve miles, situated on the high road to Bordeaux.

When we reached the foot of the bridge, General Sir Thomas Picton declined halting the third division; and it was not until he had received the most *positive instructions* to halt, that he did so. His troops were standing up and down the ladders as we passed them, when a variety of curses and imprecations took place; all the battles of Spain and Portugal were fought over again, with a mixture of rage and good humour: some vociferated that they could always lead the light division, whilst the older soldiers

were satisfied, voluntarily, to follow them : “ Let us follow the *Lights*, it is our right ; no division is entitled to bring up our rear except the fourth ; we are the takers of fortified towns, and the General-in-chief’s *three lucky divisions* ! ”

The Duke of Dalmatia now left the high road and the fine town of Bordeaux to its fate, and retired, with his principal force, up the right bank of the Adour, to support his left flank at the town of Barcelone, and to meet General Hill’s corps, which had branched off to the right, and was moving in the direction of Air, to threaten the French Marshal’s communication with Toulouse ; a point he could not give up, it being the pivot of his defence on the formidable river Garonne.

All the way to Mont de Marsan the road is straight and sandy. Instead of being received with hostility at that place, as we anticipated, we were agreeably surprised to see the people flocking without the town in vast crowds, to see *les étrangers*. Our clothing was old, and almost the whole of the men wore blanket trousers. The French expressed much wonder at seeing the troops of the richest nation in the world so threadbare*

* The soldiers carried their new clothing, which they had lately received, and which was not yet altered and made up, on the top of their knapsacks.

and poorly clad. The band struck up, and the women exclaimed, "*Ma foi! les Anglais ont de la musique! et voilà de beaux jeunes gens aussi!*" The shops were open, and the inhabitants proffered their merchandize with an easy assurance of manner, as if we had been a century amongst them: so much for a divided nation; so much for honour and glory, and the extreme *bon ton* of civilization!

The seventh and our own division entered the town, where we halted two days, and then our division shifted its quarters into villages two leagues distant from it. Our regiment took possession of the large village of Brinquet. The senior officer was quartered in a château, and invited us all to a dance; the *salle à manger* was lighted up, and the reflection shone on the highly polished floor.* The band was in attendance, but unfortunately there was only *one demoiselle*; therefore, making a virtue of necessity, we waltzed with her turn and turn about, until she was quite exhausted; and we finished by partaking of an excellent supper, consisting of the choicest viands, sweetmeats, champagne, and other delicious wines. An officer was indiscreet enough, in the warmth of the

* The floor and stairs are polished in France, as in old fashioned gentlemen's houses in the interior of England.

moment, to propose to the young lady to send for a few *grisettes* from the village, assuring her that in Spain the village maids failed not to attend on such occasions. She started with horror at such a monstrous proposal, saying, "*Dans la campagne, à la bonheur : mais des grisettes dans un salon, c'est affreux !*"

We halted some days at this village, and for a while the war was forgotten ; and convivial dinner parties were given in this plentifully-supplied country, where provisions might be purchased for a trifle : fine capons a franc each, while turkeys, geese, ducks, eggs, bacon, milk, butter, excellent wine, and all articles of consumption, were to be had at proportionably low prices.

One fine morning myself and messmate mounted our capering, snorting steeds, their ears cocked, and their carcasses swelled out with good provender, to pursue our way towards Mont de Marsan, with the laudable intention of making a few purchases for an intended dinner party. Having made our selection of pastry, sweetmeats and desert, we directed the whole to be carefully packed and forwarded to a certain wine merchant, who was busily packing up, in a large hamper, several dozens of his choicest wines and liqueurs ; and it was agreed that the whole was to be paid for at our quarters, to insure their

punctual delivery by a certain hour—to which the wily merchant and confectioner complacently and readily assented, not having failed by the bye to charge English prices on all the commodities, that is to say about a hundred per cent above the market price. We escorted the cart the greater part of the way to show the driver the right road, but when within a short distance of the village, we pointed it out, exhorting him to use all speed, and rode on to superintend other little preliminaries. Upon reaching the *maison de logement*, the people told us that the regiment had marched off three hours before towards Grenade, and not a vestige of any thing belonging to us was left behind. The people begged and entreated that we would take some refreshment, which we would have assented to, (for our appetites were as keen as the wind), but the cart and hamper were momentarily expected at the door. What was to be done? To pay for that which we could not consume, or carry away, would be the height of folly; therefore, confiding our predicament to the good-natured host, he embraced us, and, setting spurs to our steeds, at a hand canter, we quitted the long village at one end, as the cart drew up at the other; nor did we relax our pace, until the shades of evening brought us to a town

crammed with cavalry, artillery, tumbrils, baggage and commissariat.

Here we gained some tidings from one of the heavy German dragoons of the route of our division, and alighting at a hotel, we got our horses well fed, and rubbed down, and, having partaken of an excellent bottle of wine, and a dish of stewed veal, we resumed our journey.

At eleven o'clock at night, we entered another town, filled with infantry soldiers, who were standing round the fires they had kindled in the streets, whilst others were fast asleep, sitting on the stone steps, or lying under the threshold of doorways. We would fain have passed the night here, but admittance was nowhere to be gained, although we dismounted and kicked, and thumped with all our might at the several doors. These noises had so repeatedly occurred during the night through the troops outside striving to gain an entrance, that such salutations were unattended to. Thence wandering onwards amidst darkness and uncertainty we issued from the town, by a broad road, enveloped in a thick fog, for not a soul could now give us the least clue to the division; and it is impossible to convey an idea of the uncertain information in rear of an army. I have often been within half a mile of the divi-

sion, without meeting a person who knew any thing of its march, and, without the least hesitation, people would give a totally opposite direction to that followed by the troops.

In half an hour, we heard a buzz of voices to the right of the road, and through the dense mist could see the glimmer of fires, and in a few minutes more found our corps, encamped in a fallow field, where we passed a shivering night. Often is the cup of happiness dashed from the lip ; but certainly the conclusion of our intended *fête* was quite the reverse of what we had anticipated, when briskly and gaily starting for Mont de Marsan on the preceding day !

During this short suspension of hostilities with us, General Hill had been engaged with the enemy, on the 2nd of March near the town of Air, and, after a sharp affair, succeeded in driving them to the right bank of the Adour, and also in a southerly direction towards the large town of Pau.

From this place, we moved into wretched villages, situated on muddy cross roads in the neighbourhood of Cazeres. The weather continued frigid ; the atmosphere was overcast with either miserable fogs, or heavy rains.

The peasantry in Gascony speak a sort of *patois*, or broken French. The women tilled the fields,

harnessed the horses, drove and loaded carts, and handled the implements of husbandry—such as the plough, the long spade, and dung-forks—just like the men : their appearance is ugly and coarse ; many of their statures are of Herculan proportions. They wear wooden shoes, and a bundle of short coarse woollen petticoats, with a piece of coarse cloth, or sack wrapped about their heads, the flaps of which hang on their shoulders, or down their backs, to keep off the inclemency of the weather, altogether giving them a most uncouth appearance. The wives and daughters of the *gros fermiers* possess a little more life and animation, and were pretty well attired ; but they are a plain, innocent, plodding people, over whose morals the *Curé du Village* exercises a gentle sway, apparently more by the superiority of his education, than by spiritual exhortations.

These pastors reside in comfortable houses, decorated with the vine, the rose tree, odoriferous plants, &c. Their garden is generally well stocked with vegetables, or otherwise prettily arranged by some fair hand under the designation of *ma nièce*. An entrance was never gained to these abodes, unless all the other houses were crammed to excess by the soldiery.

While in this neighbourhood we frequently moved towards the high road, and stood to our

arms the whole day. On the 12th General Beresford with the seventh division entered Bordeaux, where he was received with acclamations by the populace, who hoisted the white flag, and the *cocarde blanche*, crying, “*vivent les Bourbons ! vivent les Anglais !*”

The Duke of Dalmatia, finding our left flank extended as far as Bordeaux, moved forward, and on the 13th made a feint by the roads of Conche, and Castleneau, (on the left of the Adour), to turn General Hill's right flank. The general-in-chief, to counteract this movement, threatened the town of Plaisance on the right bank of the river, by this means countermanceuvring, and threatening the enemy's right flank, and also their communication with Tarbes.—General Beresford now quitted Bordeaux, leaving the seventh division at that place under Lord Dalhousie, and the army closed up in three columns, for the purpose of ascending both banks of the Adour, towards Tarbes:—our division moved in the direction of the town of Plaisance with the hussar brigade.

One day we were with the 15th hussars on picquet at a mill to the right of the great *Chaussée*. The soldiers laid themselves down under the sheds with the horses, and the officers reposed on some

sacks of flour, just over the wheel of the water mill, which kept up an eternal clattering noise throughout the night. In the morning we came out as white as millers !

On the 17th the weather cleared, the roads dried up, the atmosphere was warm and genial, the hedges and young trees were clothed with a spring verdure, and the country looked most inviting, presenting a similar face to that of England.

On the 19th having finished our march, we encamped on a ridge of hills, about five miles East of Vic-Bigorre which lay in a valley. About two o'clock P. M. we were ordered to stand to our arms, and on reaching the summit of the hill, we saw the third division attack that town. The sun shone forth in full lustre, and a vehement fire of small arms and cannon almost enveloped with volumes of smoke, the scene of contest. We moved on the verge of the hills in a parallel line to turn the right flank of the enemy ;—a heavy brigade of cavalry during the middle of the combat, turned the right of the French through the meadows close to Vic-Bigorre, and they were finally driven through the place.

I hardly ever recollect a more delightful march than that we enjoyed towards the evening. The

sun was sinking behind the western hills, the surrounding country was wrapped in tranquillity, the din of war, had died away. The soldiers were tired, conversation ceased, and no sounds broke on the ear except the tread of the men's footsteps, or the planting of the horses' feet of the hussars, who were riding along in single files, or going off to the side of the road, so as not to retard our march.

CHAPTER VII.

Advance towards Tarbes—Sharp and successful encounter of the riflemen with the French, who are forced to retire from Tarbes—A beautiful coup-d'œil—Retreating movement of the enemy towards Toulouse—The little French cobbler and his daughter—A burdensome benefactor—Inconveniences of a miry march—The author's adventure at a farm-house—The conscious hosts—A true French château—Approach of the troops towards Toulouse—Critical situation of the author and another officer.

WE did not halt and encamp until an hour after dark. On the 20th in the morning we passed the road leading towards Rabastens on our left hand, where a picquet of the hussars had planted their vedettes. When within a short distance of Tarbes the hussars rode forward, and pushed their line of vedettes half way up the hills to the left of the road, with their carbines resting on their thighs, and within one hundred yards of the French infantry, who did not fire, although stationed on the verge of the wood.

Two battalions of rifle corps immediately filed off the road, mounted the hill, and began a most severe skirmish with the enemy, who made such a desperate opposition, that the rifles were obliged to close; the French charged, but the rifles were immovable, and, for two or three minutes, the combatants were firing in each other's faces. At last the rifles beat them back, and carried the wood.

We could also see the right of the enemy formed on some heights round a wind-mill two miles to our left, where the sixth division attacked them; and the cannon continued to play at this point. While the right of our army made a demonstration of crossing to the right bank of the Adour, opposite the town of Tarbes, two hundred *chasseurs à cheval* blocked up the wide road opposite to us. It had hedges on each side; our regiment formed column to the left of it, on a piece of waste ground; and a troop of the tenth hussars rode up and formed across it from hedge to hedge, opposed to the French horse. Two vedettes of the Chasseurs instantly walked their horses within one hundred yards of the tenth, and invited them to charge; several of us stood on the flank of our dragoons, and told them to stop a minute or two, until a company crept along the hedge to take the chasseurs in flank when their main body

seeing this instantly wheeled threes about and unmasked two pieces of cannon, which they fired at half range, and both balls flew close over the heads of the hussars. Owing to the attack of the sixth division taking the right of the enemy in reverse, they were thrown on two sides of a square, and obliged to retire from Tarbes, refusing their right face, while covering the retreat of their left wing!

The horse artillery now came forward at full trot, protected by the tenth hussars, who by half-squadrons, filled up the intervals between the guns, which presented a most picturesque and martial effect. Without further delay, the rest of our division followed up the hill to the left, in support of the rifles; and on reaching the summit a most interesting spectacle presented itself. The town of Tarbes lay in the valley to the right close to the Adour; the dense red columns of our right wing were in the act of passing it with cavalry and artillery; while the glitter of the enemy's bayonets formed a brilliant spectacle, and the tail of their winding columns covered the country, as they rapidly threaded the by-roads through small woods, villages, and over hill and dale. They were also running in a dense crowd on the high road towards Tournay, (threatened by the hussars, and the horse-artillery) where

a rapid interchange of cannon balls took place, and we were in momentary expectation of overtaking them, when broken ground and hedges suddenly intervened, and they eluded our grasp.

A French captain stood by the road side imploring his life, and calling out for the English, in evident fear of the Portuguese and Spaniards; he held a commission in his hand, and both his eyes were shot out of their sockets, and hanging on his cheeks!—On our descending from the rough country into a valley, the enemy were ascending a steep ridge rising out of it, covered at its base by a rivulet. Our army were forming up in order of battle ready for the assault, but the day was too far advanced: the French then opened their cannon all along the ridge, and particularly against our right wing, opposite the high road leading to the town of Tournay. During the twilight, the bright flashes of the cannon had a very pretty effect—the sixth division had followed them up, and we could hear their firing an hour after night-fall, while still attacking and taking in reverse the extreme right of the enemy—which obliged them to retreat during the night from this formidable range of heights.

On the following morning we crossed the heights in our front, the enemy being in full retreat towards Toulouse—by a flank march to

the right. We cut in upon the high road towards St. Gaudens, on which the second division were marching. The weather was cold, with sharp cutting winds, and a succession of rains set in.

The second day we entered a small town crowded with troops; the rain descended in such torrents, that the cavalry horses were put into the lower rooms of the houses, and we were quartered in the house of a cobbler, which was divided into three compartments: the soldiers filled the loft; the horses the kitchen; and we put up in the shop, in which there were two beds in dark recesses. The little cobbler, seeing our boots soaked through, very good humouredly proposed making us some *bonne soupe*, and, without further preamble, set about the *cuisine*. His figure was unique—he wore a cocked-hat square to the front, and as old as the hills. His hair was greased to excess, and grimed with the remains of powder, ending in a *queue* of nine inches long, and about four in circumference, tightly bound with a leathern thong. His height was hardly more than five feet: he possessed a swarthy broad bony visage, small penetrating grey eyes, thick, bushy, black eye brows, a short neck, long sinewy arms, covered with hair, (the shirt sleeves being tucked up), large hands and feet, narrow shoulders, short body, broad hips,

and bow-legs—and was the reputed father of a delicate daughter of about fifteen years of age, with light hair, skin as fair as alabaster, and cheeks vying with roses;—she meekly lent a willing hand in making us welcome to their abode, strewn with old shoes, *sabot*-lasts, leather, soles, heels, waxed ends, and live poultry,—the latter being tolerated as guests, owing to the urgent entreaties of the little *grisette*, who was in great dread that they might be plucked, if left to roost in the loft amongst the soldiery. A large iron kettle was slung over the wood fire, and filled with water, into which a few cabbage leaves were first immersed, and, when it simmered, half a pound of hog's lard was added (from an earthen jar hanging by a cord from a large beam), with a little pepper and salt; half a dozen brown pans were then laid out, into which our host cut with a clasp knife some slices of coarse bread, and with a wooden ladle, the contents of the cauldron were poured over it, the grease floating on the surface of the boiling liquid. *La voilà!* said our host. *La voilà, messieurs, la bonne soupe!* To refrain from appreciating the kind intentions of the cobbler, and his fair daughter, was impossible; but we could not partake of such a mess.

The times of scarcity were gone by, and as our

canteens arrived at this juncture, stored with every thing good, and a keg of excellent wine, we invited the civil little cobbler to partake, and he spent a glorious evening, shedding tears over his cups, and declaring that *les Anglais* were *de très bons garçons*; while the daughter sitting in the chimney corner, sang some pretty French songs. At the usual hour of rest, by common consent we laid down on one bed, and the cobbler and his daughter turned into the other; but, for the sake of decorum, the father lay with his head on the bolster, and the daughter placed a pillow at the foot of the bed, and thus turning *dos-à-dos*, they avoided each others feet, and by the glimmer of the fire, we could see the little girl's bright eyes under the coverlet.

Making our adieu on the following morning, and the weather clearing up, we continued our march, at the end of which the troops entered the various chateaux and farm-houses on each side of the way. The country being very much intersected with hedges, green fields, plantations, and gardens, we suddenly encountered an old man near some scattered cottages, who was so terrified at our unexpected appearance, that he ran up, seized the bridles of our horses, and led us to a large oven, filled with ready-baked bread, all of which he insisted upon giving to the

soldiers : thence he took us to an out-house, where there was a quantity of wine casks : “ All, messieurs,” exclaimed the peasant, “ is yours.” We assured him that every thing consumed would be duly paid for, which he would not hear of, in his over eagerness and civility, and, breaking from us, he rushed into the ranks of the soldiers, (who were quietly at ordered arms, waiting until the different houses should be marked off for their reception, according to usage), and bawled out, “ *camarades !*” although your officers will not sanction your having bread and wine, I insist upon supplying you. At length, to put an end to such rhapsodies, we agreed that, at the utmost, he might give to each soldier a pint of wine, of which they cheerfully and thankfully partook.

On the following morning, when the soldiers had fallen in, and the over-generous peasant found what an orderly set of people he had to do with, he boldly came forward and demanded payment, and, when expostulated with, bawled out with the greatest indecency, before the rest of the assembled villagers, that we were *des voleurs*, and with the greatest effrontery put himself at the head of the company, as if to stop its march. Such vile behaviour so disgusted us, that we ordered one of the soldiers to put him out of the way.

The rain began to pour down in torrents, and the road was of such a clayey substance, and so sticky, that it tore the gaiter-straps and the shoes from off the soldiers' feet, and they were obliged to put them on the tops of their knapsacks, while trudging along bare-footed, and hardly able to drag one leg after the other. This so much impeded our march, that it was nearly dark before we halted on the road, and the mounted officers were ordered to seek shelter for the men, right and left, but not further than a mile from the post of alarm.

Several officers started across the country, each fixing on some particular house. As I perceived a hill a short way off, I galloped up it, from whence, half a mile further, I saw a spacious farm and barns, the whole being enclosed by a high wall. Knowing the general civility and peaceable demeanour of the inhabitants, without further precaution, I rapped loudly at the large gates; but no person came forward, and all the windows were closed; however, quite satisfied of getting an entrance upon the arrival of the company, I rode round, to convince myself of the place being inhabited, when all at once a powerful and ferocious wolf dog bounded over the wall, and tore at the hind quarters of my horse with

such ferocity, that the animal trembled, and although I used my spurs, was almost immovable. I then drew my sabre, but, whichever way I turned my horse, the dog kept behind, and to add to my danger, a man opened a shutter with a gun in his hand. As I could not get my animal to stir, the only resource left was to dismount and engage the savage brute in foot, (my sabre had a sharp rough edge), trusting that the peasant might miss me the first shot. At this critical moment, the company mounted the hill, and the man called off his dog.

My horse was bleeding, and the heel was nearly torn off my boot:—the women came forth from the house, and threw wide the gates for our admittance, and almost prostrated themselves at our feet, expressing the greatest solicitude, and protesting, that the dog had broken loose; and, when questioned about the gun, they vehemently assured us that the man, knowing I was in danger, as a last resource intended to shoot his own dog; this excuse was ridiculous, for the moment the animal heard the voice of its master it ceased to attack. Although we were aware that these were false assertions, both from the actions and professions of the people, yet we could not do otherwise than feign to believe them. Without doubt, on my

first appearance, they thought me a straggling marauder, and they were only about to act as we might have done against foreigners in our own country, who might perchance come for the purpose of eating our provisions, levying contributions, and trampling down our fields; for although such outrages were strictly forbidden in the British army, yet people living in secluded farm-houses could not be supposed to credit such peaceable reports, until they had received ocular demonstration of the fact.

Notwithstanding the gaiety of our manner for the rest of the day, the women seemed to dread the coming night, feeling conscious of an act having been committed which they apprehended would not pass unpunished. The men did not show themselves after dark, and it was droll to witness the many little kind acts of the females, to strive to banish from our minds the occurrence.—Even on the following morning, they loaded our animals with poultry, and filled our keg with fourteen pints of inestimable wine. As they seemed in affluent circumstances, we did not refuse these peace-offerings.

At the close of this day, we were quartered in a chateau, not unlike an old-fashioned gentleman's house in England. The out-houses were in a

delapidated condition, the grounds were indifferently laid out, with the trees and avenues cut into various shapes, in representation of birds, &c. An old carriage stood in an out-house, and the horses had long tails, and were as fat as butter, and not unlike a Flanders cart horse.

The French gentleman, while showing his premises, held a rake in his hand, and was dressed in a green velvet forage cap, a frieze coat made like a dressing gown, coarse trowsers, and wooden shoes; but in the evening he was well attired; in fact quite metamorphosed. The linen, napkins and plate were in plenty, but we were much surprised at the common clasp knives at table; otherwise, every thing (such as massive plate and old fashioned china) was good, and well laid out. The stairs were carpeted and polished, and the rooms were without grates, the wood being burnt on hobs. The *filles de chambre* left their wooden clogs at the bottom of the stairs, walking about the rooms in their stocking'd feet, and, although coarsely dressed, and of rough exterior, they executed all the necessary offices with a respectful attention and extreme good nature, and, when offered some silver in the morning, they refused it, as if to say, "*Ciel !* how can we take the money of *les étrangers, et les jeunes officiers ?*"

On the sixth day we entered a town within a short distance of Toulouse. The enemy lined the opposite bank of a small rapid river, about four hundred yards from the town; a howitzer was planted over the bridge, and a group of French officers were assembled in conversation.

Another officer and myself by degrees sauntered past our sentinels, who were not pushed beyond the houses of the town. When within a hundred yards of them, we made the usual salute, but, to our astonishment, it was not returned, and the whole of the group left the spot, with the exception of one officer, who leaned on the breech of the gun,—as much as to intimate that we were too far in their country to expect confabs and that the time was come to stand to their cannon.

We regretted having placed ourselves so completely in their power: to go back was impossible with any security, if their intentions were of a hostile nature. Trusting however to the well-known courtesy of *les militaires Français*, we left the road, and walked up to the bank of the river, within fifteen yards of a French sentinel, who, with his musket carelessly thrown across his body, eyed us steadily, as if to examine whether our approach should be received in a hostile, or ami-

cable manner. Appearances certainly looked as if we had come expressly to reconnoitre the nature of the ground, and as we slowly retired, we momentarily expected a round of grape shot, and were not a little relieved to find ourselves once more behind the houses; for there was not a bush or any thing to screen us from their observation the whole of the way.

CHAPTER VIII.

Flank movement to the right—Method of feeding cattle in Gascony—Catching a goose—Halt at St. Simon—Cross the Garonne and advance on Toulouse—The French take up a position to the east of that town—The Spaniards attack the heights of La Pugade—Their terrible slaughter and precipitate retreat—The enemy advance against the fourth and sixth divisions—The sixth division carry the front of the enemy's position—Retreat of the French from Toulouse towards Carcassonne.

IN the middle of the night we were aroused and ordered to pack up and accoutre, and make a flank march to the right, over execrable roads, in order to support the second division, who were to cross the river Garonne above Toulouse, at the village of Portet. The number of pontoons, however, proving inadequate to cover the width of the river, it was tried elsewhere—On the 31st of March the pontoons were laid down within a short distance of Roques, General

Hill crossed: but the ground was found so swampy, that he was obliged to repass the river.

In this part of the country, wine abounded to such an extent, that serious alarm was experienced for the morals and sobriety of the troops. Almost every shed, and even the stables, were half filled with wine casks, (owing to the long war, and to the want of exportation), and, during the rainy weather, it was necessary to beg of the soldiers to be moderate. Publicly they were not permitted to partake of the wine; but how could they be effectually hindered from broaching casks under which they slept, after being covered with the mud of the miry roads, or soaked through and through from incessant rains? and such was the abundance of the juice of the grape, that a peasant was glad to sell a hogshead of the best wine for twenty *francs*, which was divided among our several small messes.

The people of Gascony have a particular method of feeding their cattle: the trap doors or sliding partitions communicate with the interior of the kitchens, and when thrown aside, the oxen or cows thrust in their heads, and are fed by the hand with the stalks of maize, or Indian corn.

One evening, while in the kitchen of a small house, round the cheerful blaze of a crackling

wood-fire, partaking of our dinner, and the servant girls standing behind us feeding the cattle, we were suddenly aroused by the cackling of the poultry in a large out-house—where the soldiers were quartered; and, on ascending the ladder, we observed some feathers scattered about the floor. The soldiers stood up and saluted, as if no depredations had been committed. One soldier alone remained sitting, and feigning to be in great pain from the effects of a sore foot. The officer with me having shrewd suspicions of this individual, said, “Get up,—surely you can stand upon one leg.”—“Oh no!” answered this piece of innocence, (possessing a muscular frame, and a face as brown as a berry), “no indeed Sir, I cannot; for, besides the pain in my foot, I am otherwise much indisposed.” Finding however that we were determined, he slowly and reluctantly arose from his crouching posture, by which he had concealed a half-plucked goose. This was death by martial law, and we put on a most ferocious aspect, and threatened I know not what. However, as soon as the lecture was over, and we were out of the soldier’s sight, we could no longer refrain from giving way to our hilarity, at the old marauder being so fully detected. Who could kill an old soldier for plucking a goose? The bird being duly paid for, the kind-hearted

woman not only gave it back to the soldiers, but, we understood, cooked it for their supper.

We now halted at St. Simon and pushed our advanced posts within two miles of Toulouse, situated on the right bank of the Garonne; but the enemy still held the Faubourg of St. Ciprien, facing us on the left of the river.

One day we passed in a handsome chateau, with all the rooms on the *parterre*; it was well furnished, and the doors and windows opened on a spacious lawn, from which descended a flight of stone steps of about thirty feet in breadth, to an extensive garden laid out à l'*Anglaise*, in broad and serpentine walks, labyrinths, fish ponds, fruit trees, exotics, rose trees and flower beds, which in the summer must altogether have formed a lovely retreat. The inhabitants had fled from the chateau, and all its windows, and doors, were flapping, and jarring in the wind; the knapsacks were suspended in the gilded ornaments of its mirrors, and the soldiers reposed on the silken covering of the chairs and couches.

On the night of the 3rd of April, our division broke up from before Toulouse, (the second division taking our station), crossed the river Touch and marched northerly down the Garonne, as a corps of communication between the right and

left wings of the army—in readiness to move to either flank.

On the morning of the 4th the left wing under Lord Beresford crossed the Garonne, just above the town of Grenade, by a pontoon-bridge.

In the afternoon the rain came down in torrents, and the river was so swollen and the current so strong, that the pontoon-bridge was obliged to be taken up, and Lord Beresford was cut off with his corps for four days on the right bank of the river, while the enemy had the opportunity of attacking him, or debouching by the Faubourg de St. Ciprien against him—of which they did not take advantage.

During these few days we obtained good shelter in the fine large farm-houses with which the country abounded, every one of them having a large round pigeon-house at the corner, (which was entered by a regular door from the interior of the house); the swarms of pigeons were so great, that they literally covered the whole face of the country. Here we ate pigeon-pie, omelets, and eggs in profusion. "*Diable*," said the French, "*comme les Anglais mangent des œufs*!"

On the 8th the bridge of boats being restored, we mounted our horses to see a Spanish army cross; and a more bombastical display I never

beheld ! The Spaniards crossed by companies : at the head of each marched an officer with a drawn sword, (accompanied by a drummer), and strutting in time to the tapping or roll of the drum ; exclaiming, while looking pompously over his shoulder, “ *Vamos, guerréros.* ” The very bridge seemed to respond to such glorious appeals, for it rose and fell with a gentle undulating motion, to the *rub dub, rub a dub*, of Spain’s martial drum.

As soon as these *Guerréros* had formed column on the sod of *Languedoc*, a heavy brigade of artillery passed the bridge, and one of the cannon becoming stationary in the middle of it, one of the pontoons nearly went under water ; and, had not the drivers whipped and spurred with all their might, in another instant, the boat would have been swamped, and the gun would have dragged the horses and drivers into the rapid and furious torrent.

The bridge was again taken up during the night, and, on the following day, our division formed on a rising ground near Aussonne to be in readiness to pass it ; but, having waited nearly the whole day, the Duke of Wellington quitted the spot extremely angry, leaving Sir Colin Campbell to superintend the finishing of it.

At two o’clock on the morning of the 10th,

our division crossed the pontoon-bridge, and, bringing up our left shoulder near Fenoulhiet, six miles from Toulouse the army marched in parallel columns on that place.

The country north of the town is flat, and on every side intersected with rural cottages, enclosed by gardens, fruit trees, and small plains, or fields of corn.

When within two miles of Toulouse, we could distinguish the black columns of the enemy filing out of the town to the eastward, and forming in order of battle on the *Terre de Cabade*, which was crowned with redoubts, and constituted the *apex* of their grand position nearly three miles long, and extending in a southerly direction by Calvinet, towards the road of Montauban. They also occupied with a small body of troops and two pieces of light artillery, the detached eminence of *la Borde de la Pugade*, for the purpose of watching the movements on the left and centre of our army. This small hill was of fallow ground, without hedges, trees, or entrenchments.

At the first view, the French army seemed to be formed from the right bank of the Garonne, and resting their right flank on the detached hill of *la Borde de la Pugade*, which, in reality, only formed a dislocated elbow of their position. The ancient wall of the town was lined by the enemy,

being covered at a short distance by the royal canal (which communicates with the Garonne), and runs in a half circle round the north and west sides of Toulouse. Over it there were six bridges, within five miles, occupied as *têtes-du-pont* ; the three to the southward being marked by the before-mentioned heights, which gave the enemy an exceedingly strong position, and to embrace which it was necessary to split our army into three distinct bodies, to be ready to fight independently of each other—as follows :—

Lord Hill's corps was stationed on the left bank of the Garonne (to coop up the enemy in the entrenched faubourg of St. Ciprien), but was so completely cut off from the army destined to fight the battle, owing to the river intervening, that the nearest communication with it was, at least, sixteen miles by the pontoon bridge we had crossed in the morning—although, as the bird flew, little more than two miles from the right flank of the army, composed of four divisions, and a corps of Spaniards which were destined to fight the battle. The right wing consisted of the third and light divisions, the centre of the Spaniards, and the left wing of the fourth and sixth divisions with the great bulk of the cavalry, ready to shoot forward from the village of Montblanc, to throw the enemy on two sides of a square.

At nine o'clock in the morning the forcing began on the Paris road near a large building in front of the *tête-du-pont*, in the vicinity of Graniague, by the third division with its right on the river Garonne. The left brigade of the light division branched off to the right, to make a sham attack opposite the *tête-de-pont*, near les Minimes, and to keep up the link with the third division; while the first brigade edged off to the left to support the Spaniards now moving forwards in échelon on our left. While they were crossing a small rivulet, two of the enemy's cannon fired on them from the detached eminence of *la Borde de la Pugade*. As soon as the Spaniards had crossed the stream or ditch, they rapidly advanced and drove the French from their advanced post, behind which they formed in columns for the grand attack. At this time a sprinkling musketry was kept up to our right by the third division and our second brigade, while driving the enemy behind their *têtes-du-pont*.

At eleven o'clock the Spaniards moved forward single-handed, to attack the heights of *la Pugade*, under a heavy fire of musketry and grape shot, which thinned their ranks and galled them sadly. The ground was fallow, of a gentle ascent, without hedges or trees, so that every shot told with a fatal precision. Notwithstanding this, they closed,

and kept onwards. The French position was a blaze of flashing cannon, and sparkling musketry, and the iron balls were cutting through the fallow ground, tearing up the earth and bounding wantonly through the country. The fatal moment had arrived : the Spaniards could do no more : the shouting of the French army was daggers to their hearts, and thunder to their ears, and when within fifty yards of crowning all their hopes, down went the head of their column, as if the earth had opened and swallowed them up. A deep hollow road ran parallel with the enemy's works, into which the affrighted column crowded. Terrible shelter ! for at this time the enemy sprang over their entrenchments, and stood over their victims, pouring down the bullets on their devoted heads with fatal precision, so that two thousand of them fell a prey to the adversary, without destroying hardly any of their opponents ; and, as if in anticipation of such a result, the enemy had constructed a battery of heavy calibre at the bridge of Montauban, which raked the road, and ploughed up the heaps of the living and the dead—the former crawling under the latter to screen themselves for a few short moments from the merciless effects of the enemy's projectiles.

The rear of the Spaniards now closed up, and, stretching their necks over the brink of the fatal

gulf, they turned about and fled like chaff before the wind, amid the volume and dense clouds of rolling smoke majestically floating in the air, as if to veil from the enemy the great extent of their triumph.

As soon as the fugitives could be scraped together in a lump, they once again moved forward to make a second attack, led on by a group of Spanish officers, on foot, and on horseback. The shot levelled them to the earth, without any chance of success : the disorganized column once more stood in a mass on the bank of the fatal hollow road, by this means bringing all the enemy's fire to a focus ; but at the sight of the mangled bodies of their dying comrades, their last sparks of courage forsook them, and they fled from the field, heedless of the exhortations of many of their officers, who showed an example worthy of their ancient renown. The French again bounded over their entrenchments, and at full run came round the left flank of the disconcerted Spaniards (at a point where the road was not so deep), and plied them with more bullets, nor ceased to follow them, until they were stopped by the fire of a brigade of guns, (supported by a regiment of English heavy dragoons), and attacked on their left flank by the rifle corps, supported by our brigade. This movement prevented them from cutting asunder and separating the two wings of our army.

The enemy, finding that they had totally defeated the Spaniards, immediately moved a body of troops to make head against the *fourth* and *sixth divisions*, and cavalry, which were now moving along the river Ers, parallel with the heights of Calvanet, before bringing up their left shoulders to attack that position ; but, owing to the marshy state of the ground, the troops were much impeded on their march.

After the repulse of the Spaniards, the battle almost ceased, with the exception of an irregular musketry-fire amongst the detached houses bordering the canal. During this pause in the grand event, several of us fell asleep (under the gentle rays of an April sun), from want of rest, having been under arms all the previous day, and marching nearly the whole of the night.

How long I enjoyed this slumber I cannot say, for a round shot whizzing, close over my head, caused me hastily to start on my feet. For a few seconds, I almost fancied I was at a review, or dreaming of it, for the right wing of the British army were within less than cannon range opposite the left wing of the enemy, whose bright arms and brazen eagles glistened on the venerable towers of Toulouse.

Soon after this, we descried an officer of our regiment, (who was an extra aide-de-camp to Gen.

Baron Alten) riding at the base of the enemy's position, and turning and twisting his horse at full speed, which induced us to imagine that he was wounded, and no longer able to manage the animal, which appeared to be running away with him. Suddenly he fell from his saddle to the ground, and the horse made a dead stop. Of course we thought he was killed, when, to our great surprise, he re-mounted, and came towards us at a canter with a hare in his arms, that he had ridden down.

In the middle of the day, the sixth division crossed the valley opposite the heights of Calva-net; and the interchanged cannon shots, and the forked musketry, rattled without intermission. At length, amid charges of cavalry and sanguinary fighting (for the enemy marched down the hill to meet them,) this division gained the French position, and took a redoubt, which, however, they could hardly maintain, owing to the great loss they had sustained in moving up the hill; for, while struggling with the enemy's infantry in front, their second line had been charged by the French horse*.

* It will always be a matter of surprise to me, how the sixth division managed to carry the front of so formidable a position almost single-handed. The following day, while passing over the range of heights, the fire-locks of one of its brigades were

During this part of the combat the fourth division was edging off by an oblique march to its left, to turn the enemy's right flank near the road of Montauban, which manœuvre greatly enhanced the victory on this hard-fought day.

The French several times returned to the charge on the *plateau*, and made a most desperate attempt at four o'clock in the afternoon to retake the great redoubt in the centre, but without effect.

Owing to this failure the French quietly evacuated the redoubts on the left of their position on the canal, on the heights of *Terre Cabade*, and their whole army retired behind the *têtes-du-pont*, and the faubourg of St. Etienne.

On the following day the Duke of Dalmatia held the town hemmed in almost on every side ; but, as there was not any firing, an officer and myself rode towards the road where the Spaniards had been repulsed. Its steep banks were at least twenty-five feet in depth, with two or three narrow pathways by which the Spaniards had descended in hopes of obtaining a little shelter. This spot was strewed with heaps of the slain, piled on the top of each other in strange confusion, many having tumbled over the precipitous banks,

piled, and I counted only five hundred, out of eighteen hundred stand effective on the morning of the battle. Both brigades suffered enormously in killed and wounded.

and remaining stuck on the twisted bayonets on whose points they had fallen. Death here appeared in every possible shape; some were jammed in the crowd, and propped up in an erect posture against the bank; others were standing on their heads, or sprawling with legs and arms spread out to their fullest extent. Almost the whole of the cadaverous dead were without caps, which in the *mélée* had been knocked off, and were intermixed with knapsacks, breast-plates, broken arms, bayonets, and swords. A mournful silence reigned around. No voice broke on the stillness that reigned over the lacerated remains of the swarthy Spaniards!

While looking down on these inanimate objects swept off by the scythe of war, I noticed a naked man lying on his back at my feet: as there was no appearance of any wound about his person, we were lost in conjectures as to the probable cause of his death. A Spaniard who stood by was so overcome with curiosity, that he laid hold of the dead man's hair; but, to his inexpressible wonder the head was as light as a feather, for it now appeared, that a cannon ball had struck him sideways, leaving nothing of the head remaining but the scalp and face. The sight was too horrible to look upon, and we hastily remounted our horses, and returned from this melancholy spec-

tacle. While riding over the field of battle, the motion of a horse is the most gentle and easy to be fancied: the animals cock their ears, snort, look down, and plant their feet with a light and springing motion, as if fearful of trampling on the dead soldiers.

The heights of the Terre Cabade and Calvanet are free from trees or hedges, and have two hollow roads cutting through the middle of them, which protected the French from our cavalry. The banks of these roads are so steep, and at the same time so imperceptible, that a whole brigade of dragoons at a canter might be swallowed up without any previous warning. Many dead horses lay in this hollow way, with their lifeless riders thrown to a distance, maimed, bruised, or with broken limbs.

The ascent in front of this position is very steep, but southerly; where the fourth division attacked, it is of a gentle acclivity.

The bodies of the soldiers of the sixth division lay very thick, in front of the heights of Calvanet, and also round a fort of the *maison des Augustins*. Here the Highlanders and English soldiers were intermixed with the French. The town of Toulouse lay nearly within point blank range on the west of these heights, from whence we could see the enemy's columns under arms at the *têtes-du-pont* which protected the various bridges across

the canal. They were in a manner besieged in the town, as the only road left open to them was by a narrow strip of land south of Toulouse, between the canal and the river Garonne.

On the night of the 11th the enemy retreated towards Carcassone, taking the road by St. Aigne, Montgiscard, Baziege, and Ville-franche, to Castelnaudary.

END OF THE

MEMOIRS OF CAPTAIN COOKE.

AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
BRITISH CAMPAIGN OF 1809,
UNDER SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY,
IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN:
BY
THE EARL OF MUNSTER.

NOTICE TO THE READER.

The following Narrative of one of the most brilliant and important Campaigns of the British Army on the Peninsula, was originally published, in parts, (commencing in May 1829) in the United Service Journal, under the head of "A revised Journal of an Officer on the Staff of the Army." Though anonymous, it was soon discovered by internal evidence to be the production of Colonel Fitzclarence—now Earl of Munster,—who served throughout the whole of the Peninsular Campaigns, with the exception of that of 1812, when he returned to England on promotion.

Yielding, in point of fidelity and spirit, to no existing Record of the Events of which it treats, this soldier-like Sketch is reprinted in a complete form, as a valuable addition to the Military Memoirs of The British Army.—EDITOR.

AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN 1809,
UNDER
SIR A. WELLESLEY,
IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN.

ON the 18th of January, 1809, when the last transport, containing the rear guard of Sir. J. Moore's army, sailed from the harbour of Corunna, the British little foresaw that the Peninsula was still to be the arena for their conquests and renown. None were so sanguine as to hope that their splendid successes and example should yet cause Europe to regain the moral feelings she had lost under the long victorious career of France, or

that the latter country was finally to sink under their exertions.

Neither did Buonaparte suspect, when halting on the confines of the Galician mountains, and leaving to Soult the easy task of "driving the leopard into the sea," that his legions were soon to be checked and defeated; or that his vaunted representation of the broken-hearted and dismayed state of the British army, should, by the repulse of his troops within a few days after in a set battle, become a severe reflection on the conduct of his own soldiery. Neither Soult nor the Frenchmen under his command could have supposed, at the same period, how early the fate of war would create a total reverse in their hitherto prosperous campaigns; or that their corps, which had led the advance to Corunna, should soon become the *pursued*, and in a retreat not less disastrous than that they had just witnessed. But Buonaparte ever miscalculated, and at this time was wholly unacquainted with, the perseverance of our national character, or the power of England; and when he compared her apparent means with those of France, by showing she had not a million of infantry or one hundred thousand cavalry to oppose her rival, he had to learn the extent of her vast and boundless re-

sources, and the determined character of her people.*

When this boastful and triumphant comparison was made, the ruler of France little feared that the refutation of England's inadequacy to cope with his power would be proved within seven years, by her hurling him from the throne, and leading him a captive at her chariot wheels, or that he should end his days in one of her distant colonies, in confinement and obscurity! Buonaparte thus considering the army expelled from Spain as the utmost extent of the means and exertion of the English as a military people, hastily concluded that they could not again appear on the continent. He naturally deduced from this, that the subjection of both Spain and Portugal was the inevitable consequence of his success in Galicia, and that it only required the time necessary for their occupation to secure them under Gallic sway.†

* This was not greatly exaggerated, if the artillery, the regular Foreign Regiments in the French service, and those of the various countries of Europe, at Buonaparte's disposal, are included.—*'Sous le titre modeste de protecteur, Napoléon envahit l'argent et les soldats d'une moitié de l'Allemagne,'* says Foy, speaking of the Confederation of the Rhine; and besides, he had the armies of Italy, Naples, Holland, and the Grand Duchy of Varsovie at his command.

† Cependant, parce que les Anglais s'étaient embarqués à la Corogne, Napoléon se complut dans l'idée qu'ils ne reparattraient

But how uncertain are the results of human calculation! At the moment when Buonaparte thought the Peninsula at his feet, the seeds of discontent sown by that restless ambition, which was urging him on to his ruin, began to develop themselves in a distant nation. Their growth to maturity was as rapid as opportune, and created a powerful diversion in favour of those countries to the southward suffering under his yoke.

The perhaps necessary employment of the French nation, and of the military feeling and spirit grown up since the revolution, which Napoleon fostered, had twice, previously to his invasion of Spain, caused him to direct his conquests against his most powerful military neighbour,—Austria.

The last campaign of 1806 left the family of Hapsburg indignant at their reverses, and on their vanquisher becoming entangled by his unjust aggression of Spain, they hoped a fit opportunity was offered for redeeming their character and importance in Europe. If the bold advance of Sir J. Moore into the heart of Spain, and his demonstration on Carrion, had made Buonaparte direct

point sur le continent, et que les Portugais, perdant tout espoir d'en être secourus, recevraient les Français en amis.—Telle était son aveugle confiance, que les mouvemens de l'armée étaient tracés par dates.—*Mémoires sur les Opérations Militaires des Français en Gallice, en Portugal, et dans la Vallée du Tage, en 1809.*

the most considerable portion of his armies on the front or flanks of the English, thus interrupting for a time, in other quarters, the rapidity of conquest, not less did the Austrian declaration of war, drawing off a portion of the resources of France, tend materially to the ultimate advantage of the rightful cause. Buonaparte was not only personally arrested from overrunning Spain by his return to France, but from directing a just combination among his dispersed marshals, which circumstance fortunately allowed England to regain a firm footing in the Peninsula, and, by the events of the succeeding campaign, an opportunity of renewing a good feeling and confidence in the people. Considering the reorganized Austrian as a more dangerous enemy than the broken Spaniards or expelled English, Buonaparte, on withdrawing from Astorga, only passed through Madrid, and returned to Paris. He, however, left (with the exception of the Imperial Guard, about 15,000 of whom had accompanied him across the Pyrenees,) his armies entire, under the command of his various marshals, to complete the subjugation of Spain.

Of these eight *corps d'armée*, (each equal to the whole British army in Spain in 1809,) which had crossed the frontier, five had co-operated directly or otherwise against Sir J. Moore. The sixth,

commanded by the gallant Ney, was ordered to remain in and reduce to control Galicia and the Asturias. The fourth, under Mortier, with a vast body of cavalry commanded by Kellerman, was to overawe Leon and Castille; while Victor, with the first corps, was at once to complete the ruin of the beaten Spanish armies, and to threaten the line of the Tagus, the south of Portugal, and eventually its capital. The eighth corps, which had, under Junot, served in 1807-8 in Portugal, and according to the convention of Cintra been carried to Rochelle, and subsequently recrossed Spain, and met their old antagonists before Corunna, was broken up, and its *débris* added to the second corps under Soult.*

This force was intended to take the active part of the campaign against Portugal, which country was to be immediately attacked, the orders to that effect being received within ten days after the embarkation of the British. So certain was Buonaparte of Soult's conquest, that he fixed the 5th of Febuary for the arrival of his troops at Oporto—and the 16th of the same month for his triumphant entrance into Lisbon!

* At Corunna a soldier's wife, taken in the retreat, was sent in by Junot. She brought his compliments to the general officers he had known the preceding year, and a message that he and his corps were opposite them, ready to "*pay off old scores.*"

The army under Soult consisted of 23,500 men, of which 4,000 were cavalry, divided into ten regiments. It was accompanied by fifty-six pieces of cannon. Besides these troops, a division under Gen. Lapisse was to be pushed south from Salamanca to invade Portugal, by the way of Almeida, at the same time becoming a point of communication between the corps of Victor and Soult.

The army of the latter General advanced to the southward, through Galicia, by several routes, but the principal part, with the artillery, marched through St. Jago. His directions were to invade Portugal along the sea-coast, and, with that view, he attempted to cross the Minho at Tuy, but failing, was forced to proceed up the right bank of the river as far as Orense, where he crossed that barrier. Besides the great loss of time from this disappointment and change of route, the army was much detained by the opposition of the peasantry and the remains of Romana's dispersed army, and it was only on the 10th of March it was able to enter Portugal, by the valley of the Tamega.

Though Soult met considerable opposition from Gen. Silveira,* the French army reached and

* This is the present Marquis de Chaves, who headed the insurrection in 1827, against the Constitution.

captured Chaves on the 12th, and Braga on the 20th, after defeating a corps of Portuguese troops under Baron Eben; and nine days subsequently, forced the entrenched lines covering Oporto, having been more than seven times longer on their march than had been calculated by Buonaparte. The next day Gen. Franceschi, with several regiments of cavalry, was pushed on to the banks of the Vouga, where he established his posts opposite those of Col. Trant, who had collected a few troops and ordenança, and a corps of volunteers, formed of the students of the University of Coimbra, who gave up their literary pursuits for the defence of their country. The division of Gen. Mermet was cantoned in Villa Nova, with the 31st regiment in its front in support of the cavalry. Soult's corps had been diminished upwards of 3,000 men within the two months occupied in its march, having left great numbers of sick at Chaves and Braga. Although it had overcome all opposition, its chief found himself in an isolated position, shut out from all intercourse with the other French corps, and his difficulties increasing every day, as he was obliged to separate and detach a considerable portion of his force to subdue the country, and attempt to open his communication with Lapisse.

But, however insecure and critical his post, it

was likely to become more immediately endangered by the activity of the British, whose Government, far from being discouraged at the result of the preceding year, was employed in preparation for a hearty prosecution of the contest. At the moment the British army withdrew from Corunna, the troops left in the Peninsula, including a brigade under Brigadier-Gen. Cameron, (which had advanced to the north-east frontier of Portugal,) the 14th Light Dragoons, and the sick, convalescents, and stragglers of Sir J. Moore's army, did not consist of above 7,000 men, under the command of Sir J. Craddock, at Lisbon. The want of information was great, and the state of alarm so exaggerated, that the advance of the French on that capital was daily expected. The artillery and cavalry were embarked, and the forts of St. Julien and Bugio dismantled, to prevent their guns being turned upon the ships while withdrawing from the Tagus.

The Portuguese felt the danger in which their country was placed, and the Regency called upon the people to rise *en masse*. They had little else than the populace to oppose the invader, as the same principle which had instigated the march of the Spanish corps under Romana to Denmark, had been acted upon with the only respectable part of the Portuguese army. These had been

sent into France under the Marquis de Lorna, and suffered a harder fate than the Spanish troops, the greater part of whom, by aid of the English fleet, returned to fight their country's battles, while the miserable remnant of the Portuguese perished at Moscow, under the appellation of the "*Légion Portugaise*." The remaining regular troops were scarcely to be considered as organized, and those under Silveira, though actuated by the best spirit, were little better than the rest. One regiment of two battalions, called the Lusitanian legion, raised by Sir R. Wilson at Oporto, was an exception to the general inefficiency, it having made considerable progress in discipline and order. Sir Robert had proceeded with the first battalion to the frontier opposite Ciudad Rodrigo, while the other, under Baron Eben, had been engaged in the defence of the Tras os Montes, and in the entrenchments around Oporto.

But this inefficient army had a probability of being regenerated. Scarce had the fleet returned from Corunna, when the British Government evinced its conviction that the Spanish and Portuguese cause was not hopeless, and, with a view to make the latter aid in their own defence, sent General Beresford with twelve or fourteen officers from England to re-organize and

form their army. This determination being made so soon afterwards, and before the despondency of the failure at Corunna had worn off, was much ridiculed at the time as being too late, and doubts were expressed, if Lisbon would not be in the possession of the enemy before they could reach the Tagus. This anticipation was not confirmed by events, and, with the rank of a Portuguese Marshal, General Beresford, on the 13th of March, issued a spirited address to that nation, in which he assured them, that they only required organization and discipline to make them equal to face the invader. How just were the Marshal's ideas of their latent martial character, is to be learned from their brilliant conduct in the ensuing war. Much, however, was to be done to raise from degradation the military profession in Portugal. Perhaps in no age or country had it fallen so low. Even among the Chinese, where civil and literary celebrity is ever sought before that of arms, it was never so despised, as it had been among our faithful allies since the war of succession.

In 1762-3, La Lippe had been called in by the Marquis de Pombal, who formed the army into twenty-four regiments of infantry, twelve of cavalry, and four of artillery, and which had continued, at least nominally, till the arrival of Junot.

Few of his regulations were permanent or long respected. During the whole of the latter half of the eighteenth century, in all the short successive wars, though occasionally invigorated by fresh disciplinarians from foreign countries, the Portuguese army never rose above mediocrity. It is true, but few opportunities were offered of trial, but in 1801, at Arronches, the scandalous panic that seized the corps commanded by the Duke d'Alafoes, made them to be considered worse than contemptible. Not that the people required either physical or moral qualities, as might be easily proved from their conflicts with the Spaniards: having ever placed themselves at least upon an equality, in courage and conduct, with their neighbours. The French, in their progress through the *Tras os Montes*, drew a favourable comparison of their bravery with that of the Spaniards, while it was impossible to see the peasantry and not be convinced of their bodily strength and capability of bearing fatigue.

The difficulty, of creating a Portuguese army lay not with the men but with the officers, who had sunk so low in the estimation of the country, of themselves, and of their men, as to be little superior to the degrading and menial offices, (as when *La Lippe* arrived in 1792,) they once filled, of servants in the houses of the nobility.

No cause of improvement had offered itself since those disgraceful times, which had naturally placed them on terms of the greatest familiarity and equality with their men. It was no uncommon spectacle to find them in a common *cabaret* gambling, if not cheating the soldiers out of the pay they had just made over to them. It was not less to counteract this deteriorating cause, than to organize the soldiers, that Gen. Beresford had taken officers with him from England, whose numbers were subsequently greatly increased. Those who accompanied him in the first instance, and some who afterwards joined him, were, with the view to place British Captains in command of battalions, first raised a step of rank in their own service, and received another in that of the Portuguese, when appointed to regiments.

The Marshal established his head-quarters at Thomar, and fairly grappled with all the prominent difficulties, and, aided by the example and conduct of the officers placed under his orders, at once did away the causes of the want of respect and confidence of the men. The interior economy was strictly investigated, and the regiments made efficient, not only by British arms and equipments, but by being subsidized to fight their own battles by the money of England.

Without going farther into detail, it will be

sufficient to remark, that the arrangement and system of the Marshal were so good, and improvement so rapid in the Portuguese army, that within two months from the date of his first order, a battalion of the 16th regiment was brought into collision with the enemy; and if it did not distinguish itself as much as it did on so many subsequent occasions, it evinced neither confusion nor dismay. Eighteen months after, the general conduct of the whole Portuguese army was marked by traits of discipline and bravery, and even of individual gallantry, which continued on the increase to the end of the war, and which were most unquestionably shown on many subsequent occasions, by overthrowing the veterans of France with the bayonet.

The twenty-four regiments of the line formed by La Lippe had been broken into two battalions each in 1797, and were continued at that establishment; as were the twelve regiments of cavalry, of which not above one-third had been ever mounted. The artillery was placed under British officers, as well as the other arms. To this the whole population was to be added, though as irregulars or *ordenanza*, rather than militia. This force was increased in the course of the next year, by six regiments of Caçadores, which were, at a later period during the war, doubled, on their value being duly appre-

ciated. But England was not less active in sending reinforcements of her own troops to the Peninsula. Doubts had been once entertained, whether future operations should be carried on from the south of Spain, rather than from Portugal; and the first convoy of troops was directed to Cadiz. On its reaching that port, the besotted Spaniards hesitated, as they had the year before when Sir D. Baird arrived at Corunna, respecting the disembarkation of the troops. After some futile negotiations, and (in consequence of the slow advance of the French,) in the revived hope of saving Lisbon, the British troops fortunately passed to the latter place, as the frontier statistics of Portugal are better calculated for military operations than those of Andalusia.

The first reinforcement that reached the Tagus early in March was commanded by Lieut.-Gen. Sherbrooke, which was followed in the beginning of April by another, under Major-Gen. Hill, together increasing the army to 13,000 men. The arrival allayed much the fears, and not only allowed Sir J. Craddock to take up a position out of Lisbon, and cover the great roads that led upon it, with the right on Santarem, and the left on the Sea, but even to contemplate offensive operations, and in the middle of April to push the army in advance towards the North.

In the mean time, the administration at home had determined to give the command of the army for the defence of Portugal to the same general officer who had so successfully attacked it the year before, and, in order to make room for him, Sir J. Craddock was appointed to be Governor of Gibraltar.

Sir A. Wellesley sailed on the 16th of April on board the *Surveillant*, Sir George Collier, from Portsmouth, to which place or to England he did not again return, until 1814, as Duke of Wellington, when, on his first arrival from the south of France, his Grace proceeded direct to the same town—where the Prince Regent was showing to the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia the arsenal and fleet.

The same night the frigate was nearly lost off St. Catherine's Head in the Isle of Wight: so imminent was the danger, and so close the ship to the breakers, that Sir G. Collier desired Sir Arthur to dress, and, thinking the loss of the vessel certain, advised him to stay by the wreck as long as possible, this being considered a more probable means of escape than a premature attempt to reach the shore. The frigate missed stays more than once: but a fortunate start of wind off the land prevented her wreck.* Even had all escaped with life, but for this

* The author was himself on board.—Ed.

shift of wind, (or rather the never failing happy destiny of Sir Arthur, who might have desired Sir G. Collier not to despair, while he had not Cæsar, but Wellesley and his fortunes on board) much valuable time would have been lost, not only as to striking the blow at Soult, but by allowing fresh combinations between the distant French Marshals, and perhaps not giving the opportunity of opposing them in detail.

The entrance of the *Surveillant* into the Tagus was an interesting event, when, at a distance of twenty years, it was considered, that she bore in her bosom the regeneration of England's military fame, and that Europe was to date from it the positive commencement of that formidable and permanent position taken up by our armies, which allowed its nations to breathe, and subsequently, by our victories over the common enemy, to break the spell of gloomy conviction, becoming daily universal, that the French armies were invincible.

Sir Arthur's landing at Lisbon on the 22nd of April was strongly marked by the gratifying expression of the people's feeling; they hailed him as their former deliverer, and evinced their gratitude by illuminating the city during his stay. On the 25th Sir J. Craddock, in a farewell address, bade adieu to the army, and two days

subsequently Sir Arthur took the command, and in his first order changed its staff, placing Brig.-Gen. Stewart at the head of the Adj.-General's, and Col. Murray, 3d Guards, at that of the Quarter-master General's department. The same day his Excellency went in procession with the royal carriages, escorted by a squadron of the 16th dragoons, to be introduced to the Regency, at the palace of the Inquisition in the Rocio, on his receiving from them the rank of Marshal General.

The state of affairs in the Peninsula at this time was neither satisfactory nor encouraging. Although Buonaparte had withdrawn from Spain, his legions, which had passed through Madrid, and witnessed the replacing Joseph on the throne, had subsequently overthrown all the Spanish armies. The advanced guard of the Duke del Infantado's army under Vanegas had been beaten at Ucles in January, and the army of Carvajal had met a defeat at Ciudad Real. Cuesta, with the main Spanish army, after retiring across the Tagus, and taking position at Almaraz, had allowed his flank to be turned by the bridge of Arzobispo, and was forced, in consequence, to retreat across the Guadiana, when, at Medellin on its banks, he was on the 28th of March completely routed, through the bad conduct of his

cavalry. His infantry, who from their behaviour on this occasion deserved a better fate, were so completely,—not at the mercy, for none was shown, but—in the power of the enemy's cavalry, that their horsemen were worn out with slaughtering their easily routed victims; and it was reported, many wore their arms for several days in slings, from having had such opportunity of using their sabres. The remnant of the Spanish army took refuge in the Sierra Morena, where attempts were made to recruit the infantry—the dastardly cavalry, not less disgraced in the action by their conduct, than after by the General's notice of it, scarcely requiring a man. While so little aid was to be expected for the British from these broken armies, Victor was left with 22,000 men, in a position threatening the weakest part of Portugal, and, by the existence of the bridge of Alcantara, both banks of the Tagus.

But in the mean time, Soult's position at Oporto had become more critical every day. Vigo had surrendered to the Spaniards, aided by some English ships, while Silveira had retaken Chaves, with 1,300 sick, and had continued his advance by Amarante to Penafiel. Lapisse had advanced as far as Ciudad Rodrigo, but, on finding himself opposed by Sir R. Wilson and the Spanish troops, he made

no attempt to communicate with or join Soult, and, after a little skirmishing, passed on to join Victor on the Tagus. Soult's communications were thus wholly destroyed, and his force had been much dispersed in trying to make them good ; not less than between six and 7000 men having been sent into the valley of the Tamega and other points. But, although Marshal Soult had not above half the number of men collected at Oporto that Victor's army consisted of, still the British army was not strong enough to oppose both at once. It became necessary, therefore, to act with vigour on one point, and the former army being the weakest, and in the Portuguese territory, while its retreat was endangered, drew the more immediate attention of the British General. Lest Victor should be enabled to advance to the south of the Tagus, Sir Arthur lost no time at Lisbon, and, after a stay of but six days, set out on the 23d for the army, part of which had arrived at Coimbra. All the towns were illuminated on the road, and on his Excellency's arrival at Coimbra on the 2d, in addition to other demonstrations of joy, the ladies from the colonies covered him with roses and sugar-plums !

The army was brigaded anew on the 4th of May.

Cavalry.

MAJOR-GEN. COTTON.

14th Light Dragoons.
 20th — —
 16th — —
 3rd — — King's G. Lⁿ.

Seventh Brigade.

BRIG.-GEN. CAMERON.

9th Regiment
 2nd Batt. 10th Port^{se}. Regt.
 83rd Regiment
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

Infantry.

BRIG.-GEN. H. CAMPBELL.

2 Battalions of Guards.
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

Sixth Brigade.

BRIG.-GEN. STEWART.

1st Batt. Detachments.
 1st Batt. 16th Port^{se}. Regt.
 29th Regiment.

First Brigade.

MAJOR-GEN. HILL.

3rd or Buffs
 66th Regiment.
 48th —
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

Fourth Brigade.

BRIG.-GEN. SONTAG.

2nd Batt. Detachments.
 1st. Batt. 16th Port^{se}. Regt.
 79th Regiment.
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

Third Brigade.

MAJOR-GEN. TILSON.

5 Comp. 5 Batt. 60 Regt.
 88th Regiment.
 1 Batt. Port^{se}. Grenadiers.
 87th Regiment.

Second Brigade.

MAJOR-GEN. M'KENZIE.

27th Regiment
 45th —
 31st —

Fifth Brigade.

BRIG.-GEN. A. CAMPBELL.

7th Fusileers.
 1 Batt. 10th Port^{se}. Regt.
 53rd Regiment.
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

King's German Legion.

MAJOR-GEN. MURRAY.

1 Brigade (2 Regiments)
 BRIG.-GEN. LANGWORTH.
 2 Brigade (2 Regiments)
 BRIG.-GEN. DRIBOURG.

It was subsequently divided into wings under Lieut.-Gens. Sherbrooke and Paget, and the cavalry placed under Lieut.-Gen. Payne. The same reasons that pressed the departure of the Commander of the Forces from Lisbon, accelerated the preparations of the campaign, and advance upon Oporto. A few days' delay were, however, necessary to complete the arrangements, according to the following plan of operations. While Sir A. advanced with the main force of the army on the enemy's front, a corps that quitted Coimbra on the 5th, was intended to move on the enemy's left flank and rear. This was to be under the orders of Marshal Beresford, and consisted of Maj.-Gen. Tilson's brigade, and some cavalry. It was ordered to direct its march on Viseu, and across the Douro, to co-operate with Silveira. This officer was unfortunately driven from Amarante on the 2d of May, the enemy thus opening to themselves a practicable route for carriage to the eastern frontier. Lisbon was to be covered during these northern operations by a corps of observation, under Maj.-Gen. M'Kenzie, to watch Victor. It was posted at Santarem, consisting of the General's own brigade, a brigade of British heavy cavalry, and 7,000 Portuguese. In his front at Alcantara, was Col. Mayne, with a battallion of the Lusitanian legion.

On the 6th, opportunity was taken of inspecting that portion of the army around Coimbra, on some sands two miles from the town. The British troops appeared in excellent order, and the Portuguese regiments, though not so soldier-like as their allies, looked better than was expected, as it was the fashion of the day to hold them in utter contempt. Their dark olive complexions, and blue single-breasted coats, gave them a *sombre* appearance when in contrast with our countrymen, and it could not be denied that the comparison was to the advantage of the latter. It was a fine sight, although of the 21,000 British in Portugal, only 17,000 were present, on account of the two detachment corps.*

On the 7th, part of these troops advanced in two columns on the main roads towards Oporto, by Adiha on the Vouga, and by the bay of Aveiro to Ovar. On the 9th, the remainder of the army and head quarters quitted Coimbra in the same direction. The advance of the French under Gen. Franceschi had remained on the Vouga, and arrangements were made for surprising it on the 10th.† If the success of this *coup d'essai*

* The French called the British force with which we advanced against Oporto, 30,000 men.

† Franceschi was an old opponent of Gen. Stewart, the Adjutant-General having commanded the brigade, of which a

was to be taken as a sample of our future proceedings, it would have been unfortunate, as, between the neighing of the horses of the Portuguese cavalry, and the stupidity of the guides, the enemy were prepared, and the whole was a complete failure. But for the withdrawing of the French, and the capture of two four-pounders, we had little to boast in the scrambling skirmish it produced. We advanced to the spot where they had been encamped, which was as much chosen for beauty of situation as strength. We had here the first instance of the trouble the French took in embellishing their camps; in the centre of the front they were erecting a pretty wooden obelisk.

On the following day the army advanced on the great northern road, and, about twelve o'clock, a squadron of the enemy was seen on the skirts of a wood, in front of a little village. On some three-pounders and our cavalry advancing against them, they fell back, but showed some infantry, and our light troops were directed to attack them. This produced some skirmishing as we continued to advance. The country was much inclosed; the enemy clung longer to their ground than was expected, as we only portion had been surprised at Rueda in Leon, a few months before, during the Corunna campaign.

supposed it an affair of posts ; but a column of infantry on a height over the village of Grijon soon convinced us that it was at least a strong advanced guard. The road here crossed a ridge of hills, at right angles, covered with olives and fir woods, which offered a strong position. The ground was not ill chosen, though the left was without any *appui*. Brigadier Gen. Stewart's brigade formed in line to the support of the 16th Portuguese regiment, acting as skirmishers on the left of the road, while the German light infantry were engaged on the right. The four battalions of the German legion brought their left shoulders up, and marched diagonally across to turn the left, the enemy's weak point. The skirmishing was very sharp in the woods, and the 29th regiment was forced to support the Portuguese, who were once obliged to fall back. At this moment they pushed a column of infantry down the road through the village of Grijon, which being reported to Sir Arthur, he replied in the most quiet manner, " If they come any farther, order the battalion of detachments to charge them with the bayonet."

The officers of the staff, many of them at that time young soldiers, could not help evincing strong feeling on hearing the simple and distinct manner in which this order was given ;

but before some months had passed over their heads, they had opportunities of not only hearing, but seeing them carried into execution. On this occasion the alternative mentioned by Sir Arthur did not occur, as, on their flank being turned, and finding our whole force on their front, about two o'clock they retired from their position. Our guns were brought up to bear upon them in their retreat, Brig.-Gen. Stewart put himself at the head of two squadrons, and trotted after the enemy, who withdrew their troops with astonishing rapidity. The country was much inclosed and intersected, and, on nearing the enemy's rear guard, the cavalry entered a deep ravine, closely wooded. The French lined the sides with their light infantry, who opened a close and sharp fire, which, for a moment, created some confusion, and checked the advance ; but on coming in sight of five companies, drawn up in line in a wider space, by the exertion and example of the General, the latter led them to the charge, broke through the enemy, and made above one hundred prisoners. This rapid movement threw the 31st French regiment off the road of retreat, and they fell back on Ovar, where finding Maj.-Gen. Hill, they withdrew, after some skirmishing, to Oporto, during the night. Thus ended the operations of this day, which were beauti-

ful in their prosecution and satisfactory in the result.

The enemy's corps (besides the cavalry engaged the day before on the Vouga,) consisted of 4 or 5,000 infantry of the division of Mermet, which had been pushed on to this ground from Villa Nova on the 8th, on Soult's hearing of our probable advance. It was the 47^e *de ligne* that was charged on the retreat, and however valiantly they may have acted, they cannot be praised for prudence or judgment in forming a line to receive cavalry.* Instead of this, had they vaulted over the enclosures, or scrambled up the banks, they might have killed every man of the cavalry without endangering a soldier. One of the privates was very loud in his attempts to draw notice, and by his vociferation, that he was the son of a marquis, proved the aristocratic feeling not quite deadened by the revolution, though the conscription had reached and levelled all ranks of society. Our loss was under one hundred men: one officer of the 16th Dragoons received no less than three balls, though happily none proved mortal.

* In the French account of this campaign, published at Paris 1821, the Author represents *le 47^e de ligne*, when covering this retreat, as "se conduisant valeureusement."

Our first progress to the front, on the morning of the 12th, showed us the horrors produced by a war of invasion. Beyond Grijon nine bodies of unfortunate Portuguese peasants were seen hanging on trees by the side of the road, blackened in the sun. The common people, naturally considering the enemy as *hors de la loi*, sought every means, open or otherwise, for their destruction. This brought on them that retaliation produced by the military ideas of a regular army, who conceived they had only a right to be opposed by *soldiers*, and not by the unclothed and unorganized population. These they considered as insurgents and brigands, and shot and hung, with as little compassion as we should a burglar. The exasperation of the French was not wholly uncalled-for, as the atrocities committed on the stragglers and sick were horrible, amounting often, besides shocking lingering deaths, to frightful mutilations.

A hair-dresser who escaped from Oporto in the night, had brought in, soon after day-break, the intelligence that the enemy had destroyed the bridge of boats over the Douro at one o'clock; and the still more disagreeable information, that all the boats were secured on the other side the Douro. On the fugitive barber being taken to Sir Arthur by Colonel Waters of the Adjutant General's Department, that officer was instructed

to proceed immediately to the banks of the river, and directed to procure boats, *coute qui coute*.

As we advanced on the high road to Oporto, this report of the destruction of the bridge was confirmed, and doubts came fast and thick upon us, respecting the passage of the Douro in the face of an enemy. On our arrival at Villa Nova, we found General Hill's brigade arrived from Ovar, and with the troops of the centre column choking the streets; through these Sir Arthur threaded his way, and took post on the right of the town in the garden of the convent of Sierra. From this elevated spot the whole city was visible, like a panorama, and nothing that passed within it could be hidden from the view of the British general. The French guards and sentries were seen in the various parts of the town, but no bustle was evinced, or even apparent curiosity. No groups were noticed looking at us, which was afterwards accounted for, by learning that the French were ordered to remain in their quarters ready to turn out, and the Portuguese not allowed to appear beyond the walls of their houses. There were a few sentries in the quays, but none without the limits or above the town. A line of baggage discovered retiring beyond the town across the distant hills, was the sole indication of our threatening neighbourhood.

The passage of a river in the front of an ene-

my is allowed to be the most difficult of military operations; and when it became obvious, from the collection of boats on the other bank, that precautions had been taken to secure them from us, the barrier appeared insurmountable. General Murray had been directed to march in the morning to try and cross the river, about five miles up at Aventas, but having only four battalions and two squadrons, unless we could aid his successful passage, he would lie open to defeat; and in consequence our anxiety was very great to establish ourselves on the opposite bank. In the meanwhile Colonel Waters (who has since become so distinguished for his intelligence and activity) had passed up the left bank of the river, searching for means to cross it, and about two miles above the city, found a small boat lying in the mud. The peasantry demurred at going over to the other side to procure some larger boats seen on the opposite bank; but the Colonel, (from speaking Portuguese like a native,) learned that the Prior of Amarante was not distant from the spot, and hoped by his influence to attain his object. This patriotic priest, on learning the desire of the British, joined with Colonel Waters in inducing the peasants, after some persuasion, to accompany the Colonel across, who brought back four boats.

When our doubts and fears were at the highest,

this agreeable information arrived, and was received by all with the greatest satisfaction, while three companies of the Buffs, accompanied by General Paget, were immediately conveyed to the other side.

The spot at which they passed over and landed was about half a mile above the city, at the foot of a steep cliff, up which a zigzag road, or winding path, led to a vast unfinished brick-building, standing on the brink. This was intended as a new residence for the bishop, and placed in the Prado, being surrounded by a wall with a large iron-gate, opening on the road to Vallongo. It was a strong post, and the three companies, on gaining the summit, threw themselves into it, as it at once covered the place of disembarkation, and was for themselves a good means of defence. Our artillery was posted on the high bank, on the other side, completely commanding the Prado and the Vallongo road.

Soult had his quarters on the side of the city near the sea, and, having collected all the boats, as he supposed, on the right bank, considered himself in perfect security. He thought if we made any attempt to cross, it would be in conjunction with our ships lying off the bar, and all his attention was directed to that quarter. He even turned into ridicule the first report of our

having crossed, and discredited the fact to the last, until it was incontestably proved by our firing. The boats had made more than one trip before any one in the town appeared to notice it. Foy has the credit of being the first to discover our having passed, and he instantly ordered the drums of the nearest battalion to beat the *general*. We heard the drums beat when nearly the whole of the Buffs had crossed, and soon saw symptoms of bustle and confusion in the town, and the French regiments forming on their parades. This was an anxious moment, and just as the whole of the Buffs had landed, a battalion was observed moving down a road towards them. This was the 17th, brought down by Foy, and which was quickly supported by the 70th. The first made an attack on the Buffs, who stood their ground, giving a tremendous fire, while our artillery from the opposite side killed and wounded a great number of the enemy.

More boats, in the mean time, were brought across and more troops; the 48th, 66th, and a Portuguese battalion landed, and not only defended themselves successfully, but even drove the enemy from the walls, between the town and the bishop's palace. This petty success was seen by Sir Arthur and his staff, who cheered our soldiery as they chased the enemy from the various

posts. The enemy's troops now came through the town in great numbers, and obliged our troops to confine themselves to the enclosure. They continued running along the road towards and beyond the iron-gate, while our shells and shot were whizzing through the trees and between the houses into the road as they passed. They brought up a gun through the gate to batter the house; but this proved an unfortunate experiment, as our troops increasing in number by fresh embarkations, (though General Paget was wounded), charged and captured it. They also brought some guns to bear from the open spaces in the town, but they were tamely if not badly served. But General Murray had made good his position on the north bank of the river, and we soon descried him making as much show as possible, marching with his ranks open towards the Vallongo road, thus threatening the communication of the enemy with Loison. He was not, however, strong enough to interrupt the retreat of 10,000 desperate men; for the French now began to think of nothing else, and directed their march toward Amarante. On their deserting the quays, the Portuguese jumped into the boats, which soon transported across, (amidst the cheers of the people and the waving of pocket-handkerchiefs by the women from the windows,) the

guards and General Stewart's brigade, who proceeded through the town with the greatest speed:

The Buffs, in the mean time, had dashed into the city and cut off a battery of Light Artillery in retreat, which, becoming jammed between that regiment, and the 29th received the fire of both, and was captured. The flight of the enemy was continued, but they were overtaken by the two squadrons which had passed with General Murray, led by Brig.-Gen. Charles Stewart, who charged the rear and made 200 prisoners. Major Hervey, who commanded the Dragoons, lost his arm. The enemy collected their scattered troops at some distance, but continued their retreat towards Amarante in the night. Our loss did not exceed 120 men, while the enemy, besides killed and wounded, left in our hands 500 prisoners and 1000 sick in the hospitals, and several pieces of cannon. The city was illuminated at night, and Sir Arthur, without allowing himself any rest, the same evening gave out an order of thanks to the army. The operations of the three preceding days had been most gratifying, and the quickness with which the enemy had been forced from his various positions and pursued, seldom equalled. The army had advanced 80 miles in four days, three of which were in constant presence of the enemy.

Sir Arthur had completely surprised in his quarters one of the most distinguished French Marshals, and consummated in his face the most difficult operation in war, that of crossing a deep and rapid river before an enemy. Nothing can relieve Soult from the disgrace of this day ; and all that has been or whatever may be written in his defence, can but palliate his want of precaution and fatal security. The rapidity of Sir Arthur's own movements had been wonderful ; for within twenty-six days since leaving Portsmouth, Oporto was captured and the enemy in full retreat. Captain Fitzroy Stanhope, one of the Commander-of-the-Forces' aide-de-camps, was sent to England with the dispatches of this success by one of the ships cruising off the port, whose crews from the sea had seen the smoke of the firing during the actions of the 11th and 12th.

The retreat of the enemy was directed upon Amarante, the seizure of that place from Silveira by Loison, ten days before, having opened them a loop-hole for escape. But Marshal Beresford, after crossing the Douro at Pedro de Regoa, had joined Silveira, and on the 11th drove Loison out of Amarante, and thus closed the road and the enemy's hopes in that direction. Loison fell back on Guimaraens by the good carriage-road

that led to Chaves, sending information of his movement to Soult at Oporto. Soult on his arrival at Penafiel, on the night of the 12th, received this disagreeable news, and finding himself pressed in so many directions, and no road open for carriages, determined at once to destroy the heavy material of his corps and to join Loison across the Sierra de Santa Catherina, at Guimaraens. Capt. Mellish, who was sent on the morning of the 13th to Penafiel, confirmed the report which had reached Oporto, of the destruction of their ammunition-waggons, guns, and carriages. The cannon had been placed mouth to mouth and discharged into each other, by trains laid communicating through the mass of baggage and ammunition waggons.

Want of provisions and uncertainty of the enemy's route prevented the advance of the army on the 13th, but the Germans were pushed on with some six-pounders on the road of the enemy's retreat. On ascertaining that the enemy had given up the idea of retreating by Amarante, orders were sent to Marshal Beresford, to direct his march on Chaves, at which place he arrived on the 16th, detaching Silveira in the direction of the enemy's rear on Ruivaens. On the 14th, the army advanced half-way on the road towards Braga. Soult collected his army, (the garrison of

Braga retiring on our advance) on the morning of the 15th at Guimaraens, but finding our troops at Villa Nova de Famillacao, and no road open for cannon, he destroyed the baggage and the military chest of Loison's corps, and in despair took to the Goat-herds' paths across the mountain, trusting to the interest, aid, and information procured by the Bishop of Braga. Their army was in great confusion during the 13th, but the two following days it became totally disorganized. The paths were so narrow, that but one man could pass at a time, and the cavalry were obliged to lead their horses, while their column, thus distressingly lengthened, had the additional misery of incessant rain that fell in torrents during the whole of this trying period. The peasantry, happy in revenging the horrors and atrocities of their enemy's advance, watched them like vultures, and failed not to dart upon all who sunk under fatigue; the stones they rolled on them swept whole files into the abysses, while single shots from the mountain-tops slew soldiers in the column of march. Their sufferings met commiseration from the British alone, who had not suffered from the guilty acts for which they were now receiving retribution.

Their *déroute* was so complete, that Sir A. Wellesley thought it unnecessary to follow them

with the whole army beyond Braga, which city he reached on the 16th. The probability of Victor's threatening the south was also to be taken into consideration, and he therefore contented himself in pursuing with some cavalry, the Guards, and Brig.-Gen. Cameron's brigade, while the Germans, following the enemy, even with three-pounders, across the Sierra de Santa Catherina, reached Guimaraens the same day. The French continued their retreat, and on the night of the 15th reached Salamonde, where their position was most alarming. They found one of the bridges on the Cavado, on the road to Rui-vaens, destroyed and occupied, while that called Pontè Nova only offered a single beam. They, however, surprised and killed the Portuguese who guarded the last, and this proved the safety of their army. They restored the troops into some order on the night between the 15th and 16th, while the bridge was being repaired, which was made passable by the morning, and allowed them to continue their march towards Montalegre, leaving a rear-guard at Salamonde. Our cavalry discovered them about half-past one o'clock, but the Guards did not arrive until late. The position of the enemy was behind a deep and wide ravine, accessible only by the road, with their right on the torrent, and the left upon a ridge of

broken mountains. The light troops were directed to turn this point, and when sufficiently on their flank, about half past six, the column and two-three-pounder guns, which had joined from Gen. Murray's column, were pushed along the road to attack in front. The enemy, who had placed their pickets, thinking the cavalry were the only troops up, and hoping to continue all night, instantly retired from the position, and, as it was almost dark, little advantage could be taken of the confusion in which they fled, farther than that of the guns firing on their columns, and the light infantry pressing them *en tirailleur*. A few prisoners were made, among whom was an officer. The rain continued incessant, and the miserable village scarcely allowed cover for a quarter of the troops.

The next morning the disasters of the enemy in their flight of the night before were fully revealed by the wreck left at and near the bridge over the Cavado. The bridge had been only partially repaired, and the infantry were obliged to file, and the cavalry to lead their horses across. The passage must have been ever dangerous, but the confusion occasioned by our pursuit and cannonade, and the darkness of the night, rendered it to a degree hazardous. The rocky torrent of the Cavado, in consequence, presented next

morning an extraordinary spectacle. Men and horses, sumpter animals and baggage, had been precipitated into the river, and literally choked the course of the stream. Here, with these fatal accompaniments of death and dismay, was disgorged the last of the plunder of Oporto, and the other cities north of the Douro. All kinds of valuable goods were left on the road, while above 300 horses, sunk in the water, and mules laden with property, fell into the hands of the grenadier and light companies of the guards. These active-fingered gentry soon found that fishing for boxes and bodies out of the stream produced pieces of plate, and purses and belts full of gold and silver; and, amidst scenes of death and destruction, arose shouts of the most noisy merriment.

Soult reached the pass of Ruivaens before Silveira, or his capture would have been certain; but at that place learning that Marshal Beresford had arrived at Chaves, he turned the head of his columns towards Montalegre. The British army being greatly distressed from fatigue, want of provisions, and bad weather, only advanced a league on the 17th; but a squadron of cavalry and a battalion of Germans, were pushed to the bridge of Miserele and Villa da Ponte. On the 18th, the Guards, Germans, and Brig.-Gen. Cameron's brigade, pushed on in pursuit of the

enemy, whose track might have been found from the *débris* of baggage, dead and dying men, (worn down by fatigue and misery to skeletons,) houghed mules, and immense quantities of cartridges, which the wearied soldiery threw away to lighten themselves from even the weight of the balls.

Marshal Beresford had directed Silveira to march on Montalegre, but he arrived about two hours too late, the enemy having dragged their weary march along by that town and across the frontier, at twelve o'clock. This was witnessed by some of our officers, who had pushed on, and observed their distressed and miserable state. On our arrival at Montalegre, we saw their retiring columns in march fairly over the Spanish frontier, and a village on their route in flames. However, Col. Talbot, of the 14th light dragoons, followed the enemy's route for some way, and made prisoners an officer and 50 men. Marshal Beresford crossed the frontier, but proceeded no farther than Ginso, on hearing that Sir Arthur had given up the pursuit. The Commander-of-the-Forces, from the advices received from Gen. M'Kenzie, had become anxious respecting the line of the Tagus, and, being content with seeing the enemy across the frontier, desisted from a more northern advance, and ordered the troops to

be cantoned in the nearest villages, wherever the order might reach them.

Thus ended this short but active operation of twelve days, in which the disasters of the Corunna campaign were repaid on the corps of Soult with interest, as the distress and misery of the enemy were more considerable than we had suffered in the preceding January. Instead of the fine Gallician road of retreat, they were obliged to file through mule and even goat-herd paths, while the incessant rain was more distressing than the snow. The French had not stores and supplies to fall back upon, but, on the contrary, passed through the most unproductive wilds in the valleys and mountains. But the difference of the circumstances of the two retreats marks their degrees of misery. The peasantry, while friendly to us in Galicia, evinced, in the *Tras os Montes*, every mark of hatred to the enemy, whose cruelties had well deserved severe retributive justice. This was carried to a distressing extent, and though it kept the French together, added greatly to the extent of their loss. Our army was never so disorganized in Galicia as that of the French, who could not have attempted to fight a battle at Montalegre, as we did at Corunna. The loss of men (including Soult's invasion and retreat) seems to have been nearly equal; but the enemy, besides

the military chest and baggage, (of which we only sacrificed a part,) left the whole of their artillery, while we embarked ours safely at Corunna. But Soult saw that his escape could be alone confined to his men, and barely avoided capture, if not destruction, by sacrificing the whole of his *matériel*. The fortunate chance of finding a traitor in the Bishop of Braga tended to the safety of their retreat, which had been constantly endangered, and would have been intercepted, had he continued his march from Salamonde, on Chaves, instead of Montalegre.

Intelligence from the south of Victor's intention to invade Portugal had induced Sir A. Wellesley to avoid pushing more troops beyond Braga than was absolutely necessary, in order that they should be as near and as ready as practicable, to proceed against Victor. This Marshal, having been joined by Lapisse, hoping to create a diversion in favour of Soult, seized, with a corps of 12 to 14,000 men, the bridge of Alcantara, and pushed his patrols to Castello Branco. This movement required strict attention, and rendered necessary a more speedy retrograde movement from the northern frontier than would have been desired after the fatigues of the troops; but, only allowing two days' rest at Oporto, they were withdrawn to Coimbra, by the same routes by which

they had advanced. Head-quarters were on the 23rd at Coimbra. Here the Portuguese regiments, which had acted with us in the *Tras os Montes*, were ordered to form the garrison of Oporto. These regiments had given some hopes of good promise, yet none were so sanguine at this time as to expect from them their subsequent bravery and efficiency.

Sir Arthur continued his route on the 5th to Thomar, where we found the heavy brigade, consisting of the 3rd dragoon guards and 4th dragoons, which had disembarked while we were in the north, and appeared in excellent condition. Head-quarters were established at Abrantes on the 8th of June, from whence Major-Gen. M'Kenzie, on our advance, had been pushed forward to *Castello Branco*; as Victor, finding that Soult's retreat had left Portugal free from danger in the north, considered his own position less tenable, and had withdrawn from the north of the *Tagus*. The French army soon afterwards fell back from *Caseres* upon *Merida* and *Medellin*.

Although it was understood that Sir Arthur's orders only extended to the defence of Portugal, yet he felt that these stirring times required active exertions from all Europe, and that tranquillity was incompatible with the strides France was making to universal dominion. The cause

of our allies on the spot, and of those more distant, struggling in Germany, pointed out the propriety of some attempt to create at least a diversion in their favour. It was evident that, could arrangements be made with the Spaniards, the disorganization of Soult's army offered an opportunity for striking a blow at Victor, and perhaps at the Spanish capital, particularly as Sebastiani was supposed to be fully employed in La Mancha. Sir Arthur, in consequence, offered to aid the Spaniards in a forward offensive movement into Spanish Estramadura. Such a step appeared the only means of re-establishing the war in the Peninsula, as the cause of Spain was fast sinking under the superior troops and management of the French, who, however they might dread the population, had learned that the armies were incapable of opposing their progress*. Much precious time was wasted in the arrangements for the necessary co-operation of the two armies, which, but for the pride and obstinacy of Cuesta, might have been more usefully employed. It was only after conside-

* The Author of the "*Voyage en Espagne et Lettres Philosophiques*," says at this time, "*Les Espagnols ne pouvaient plus rien par eux-mêmes : ils n'avaient à opposer que des partis mal armés, mal équipés, mal aguerris, et plus mal commandés encore.*"

rable *negotiation*, (an expression perfectly applicable to the intercourse between ourselves and our allies, though we had only in view the saving their country,) that it was determined to make a simultaneous advance into Spanish Estramadura.

In the meanwhile, Victor, who had retreated from the Guadiana, and withdrawn his army across the Tagus, was evidently falling back to receive aid from Madrid and La Mancha. The plan for this forward movement, was the advance of both armies along each bank of the Tagus, and a junction of the allies in front of the enemy in the plains of Estramadura. The British were to march to the north of the river by Coria and Placentia, turning Almaraz and the enemy's posts facing Cuesta, while the others were to cross at Almaraz, and to co-operate with our advancing columns. It was necessary to secure the frontier of Portugal to the north and north-east, and the passes along the frontier of that country leading from Castille and Leon, as two *corps d'armée*, besides that of Soult, were in the north of Spain.

Marshal Beresford, posted near Almeida, was to undertake the first with the Portuguese army, while Cuesta promised to occupy the Banos pass, leading direct from Salamanca upon Placentia. The Spaniards engaged to find means of collect-

ing and furnishing us with provisions. On the 27th June, head-quarters left Abrantes for Villa del Rey ; on the 28th, they reached Cortesada ; the 29th, Sarzedas, and Castello Branco on the following day ; and halted the 1st of July. They continued their march on the 2nd to Zobreira ; and the 3rd, passed the frontier to Zarza Mayor, where they crossed upon the route of the captured Gen. Franceschi, who, after reaching Spain with Soult's army, had been taken in Leon, and was being carried to Seville, fated to die incarcerated within the walls of Grenada. He was a distinguished officer of light cavalry, and had been opposed to us not only six weeks before on the Vouga, but the like number of months antecedently on the plain of Leon. He was dressed in a hussar's uniform, and decorated with a star, bearing an emblem similar to the arms of the Isle of Man, three legs diverging from a common centre.

The army was here joined by the Lusitanian legion under Sir R. Wilson, and after halting on the 4th, reached Coria on the 5th, Galestad on the 7th, and Placentia on the 8th. The approach to this city drew forth the admiration of all. The bishop's palace and cathedral tower above the houses, which rise from a bed of verdure, bordered by the river, while the whole is backed with the most splendid mountains, with silver tops

of perpetual snow. The river above this city is divided into two branches, which form an island, covered with the finest trees.

The several reinforcements received antecedently to, and during our short stay at Placentia, rendered necessary a new distribution of the regiments and brigades. The cavalry were divided into three brigades; the first, of the 14th and 16th light dragoons, under Sir Stapleton Cotton; the second, commanded by Gen. Fane, consisted of the 3d dragoon guards and 4th dragoons; and the third, of the first German hussars, and 23d light dragoons, led by Gen. Anson.

The infantry was divided into four divisions:—

1st. DIVISION.—LIEUT.-GEN. SHERBROOKE.

BRIG.-GEN. H. CAMPBELL, Guards and 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th. Regiment.

BRIG.-GEN. CAMERON, 61st, 83d. Regiments, 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th. Regiment.

BRIG.-GEN. LANGWORTH, 2 Batt. King's German Legion.

BRIG.-GEN. LOWE, 2 Batt. King's German Legion.

2d. DIVISION.—MAJOR-GEN. HILL.

BRIG.-GEN. STEWART, 29th, 48th Regiments, 1 Batt. Detachment.

MAJ.-GEN. TILSON, Buffs. 48th, 66th. Regiments.

3d. DIVISION.—MAJOR-GEN. M'KENZIE.

1st. Brigade, 24th, 31st, 45th. Regiments.

COL. DONKIN's Brigade, 5 Comps. 5 Batt. 60th Regt. and 87th 88th Regts.

4th DIVISION.—BRIG.-GEN. A. CAMPBELL.

1st Brigade, 7th, 53d, Regiments, 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regiment.

2nd Brigade, 2 Batt. Detachment, 97th Regt. 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regiment.

To these was to be added the Lusitanian legion under Sir R. Wilson, being the only Portuguese troops employed in this operation.

This distribution into divisions was the first step to the gradual growth of these corps into little armies, complete in themselves like the Roman legions, being, (with the sole exception of cavalry,) about their strength. The light companies of the regiments composing them were formed into a battalion, which under some intelligent officer, ever marched at the head, and to which was added a company or more of the deadly riflemen of the foreign corps, the 60th. These were the Velites, while the battalions were all worthy to be considered as *Triarii* or *Principes*. They, had subsequently artillery, spare ammunition, and engineer, medical, and commissariat staff attached to them; and when each was increased in 1810, by a Portuguese brigade, consisting of a battalion of light infantry, and two line battalions, they became in themselves superior in numbers to some of the petty expeditions in which England has often placed her

hope, while they have only wasted her strength. Our whole force of British did not consist of 18,000 men, principally of men raised by the voluntary enrolment of the militia.

We learned at Placentia, that the French occupied Talavera de la Reyna, and were supposed to be waiting for reinforcements from Madrid and La Mancha. During the concentration of the army at Placentia, Sir Arthur had his first personal communication with Cuesta at Casa del Puertos. His Excellency passed in review the Spanish army, and definitively settled the plan of the campaign.

The British army was to cross the Teitar, and direct its march upon Oropesa, where it was to form a junction with the Spanish army from Almaraz, and to advance on Talavera de la Reyna. The cavalry of the Spaniards under the Duke of Albuquerque, and the division of infantry commanded by Ballasteros, were to continue and move on the left bank of the Tagus, and cross that river at the Puente del Arzobispo.

To diminish and separate the enemy's force, and distract their attention, General Vanegas from La Mancha was to threaten Aranjuez, while Sir R. Wilson, who was already on the Teitar, was to have, besides his own corps, some few

Spanish troops, and to act upon their other flank, and by pushing to and beyond Escalona, make them uneasy respecting the capital.

Sir Arthur, after having halted eight days at Placentia, moved on the 17th to Talaquela; on the 18th to Majedas, and on the following day to Casa de Centinela, across vast plains, occasionally covered with forests of cork trees. These quarters of the 19th, as the name indicates, consisted of a single house, which offered such miserable accommodation, that Sir Arthur, as well as the rest of the staff, preferred sleeping in wigwams, made with boughs of trees. On the 20th, while the army pushed on to Oropesa, the heat and the want of water were so great, that the troops suffered exceedingly, and several men sank under exhaustion. Here we became an allied army, forming a junction with the Spaniards, from whom we hoped, however we might doubt, to receive support and assistance. But the first view of the infantry considerably damped our expectations, though we were assured their cavalry, moving across at Arzobispo, were to appear (for we had not forgotten their conduct at Medellin) the best of the army. On further acquaintance, however, our conclusions respecting even this part of the army were not more favourable than that we had formed of their sister

arm the first day we joined them ; as they wanted in spirit and conduct, what the foot soldiers required in appointments and organization.

The army of Spain, before the breaking out of the Revolution, though not so degraded as that of Portugal, had been long declining. Although the army intended for the coast of Barbary, assembled under Gen. Count O'Reilley, as late as 1788, was in an efficient state, it had greatly altered for the worse within the last twenty years. Instead of keeping pace with the rest of Europe in improvements in the art of war, Spain had considerably retrograded ; and while the two last years had shaken to pieces the old establishment, the officers educated under it were incapable of forming a new army.

Although the men were the same as those who, three centuries before, had raised the Spanish name to the height of celebrity it so well deserved and so long maintained, they were no longer led by a chivalrous nobility and gentry. The officers taken from these classes in the beginning of the 19th century, evinced in their character the debasing state of the Court and Government.

In July, 1809, it was but the remnant of an organized army, and even this was only evinced (except in a few regiments) in the appellation of the corps known to be of long standing. A por-

tion of the garde-du-corps accompanied this army; the sole remains of the court establishment of the past Bourbons, whether of France or Spain. It had been created by Philip V. on taking possession of the throne of Spain at the beginning of the last century, and consisted entirely of officers. Those with Cuesta bore cartridge belts of green leather and silver. Some of the heavy cavalry looked respectable, particularly the regimiento del Rey, the first of dragoons, which, commanded by a relation of Cuesta, would have passed muster in any army.

The carabineers, a part of the royal guard, and who bore a better character for conduct in the field than the other regiments of cavalry, were efficient both in men and horse, as well as in appointments.

A brigade of two regiments of heavy dragoons, one of which was the regiment of Saguntum, attracted the attention of the British officers, from being dressed in yellow with cocked-hats, and they looked better than would be supposed from so singular a costume.

Their light cavalry consisted of Hussars (*Usares*) and Chasseurs, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow. Little judgment seemed to have been employed in proportioning the size of the horse to the light or heavy cavalry, though

it must be allowed the Spanish horses offer little choice, being universally slight, and not so well adapted for the shock of a charge as for an Eastern irregular kind of warfare.

The Spanish cavalry had a means of turning their jackets and sleeved waistcoats into a stable dress, by the sleeves, taking off at the shoulders, being only laced on with a differently coloured cord from that of the coat; thus, besides being useful, having a good appearance. Their mode of riding was new to the English; the stirrup leathers were so long, that they could only touch them with their toe; while the carabine, hanging perpendicularly along the valise, was equally novel. Boots were far from universal, and many had in their stead a kind of leather legging, stiff-fitting, buttoned tight to the limbs, and formed like a gaiter, coming over the shoe. Many horsemen, however, were devoid of covering for the legs or feet, and the naked toe was seen peeping through a sandal, touching the stirrup. Of the infantry, the Walloon Guards, (consisting principally of foreigners,) and the Irish brigade, were in the best order. The first, in two or more battalions, were dressed in dark blue, and broad white lace; while the uniforms of the latter were light blue. These consisted of the regiments of Yrlanda, Ultonia, and Hibernia, being the re-

mains of the Irish Catholic regiments. At this time, although they had no privates, there were still among them some few officers of that nation. The white Bourbon uniform³ had entirely disappeared, and circumstances and economy had changed the colour of the principal part of the infantry into a deep chocolate.

But several battalions were, with the exception of the British arms, little better in appearance than peasantry; and though the major part of them had chaccos, many could only boast a kind of sandal instead of shoes, and in lieu of cross, waist-belts, from which hung tubes like the ancient Bandeleer, lined with tin, each containing a cartridge. Few had great coats; the generality having blankets, (with a hole in the middle for the head to pass through,) hanging loose about their person.

Their artillery was good, from attention having been given to it before the breaking out of the war, but the train was unlike any other in modern armies, the guns and ammunition-waggons being drawn by mules, not two abreast, but in teams like cart-horses, without reins, and under no farther command than the voice of their conductors, who ran on foot on the side of the road. Their guns were heavy, and among the field batteries were several of twelve-pounders.

Their *matériel* for provisions, stores, and bag-

gage was perfectly inadequate to their army, and ill adapted for their country. Instead of a large proportion of sumpter mules, they were accompanied by a vast train of tilted two wheeled carts, carrying little, and with long teams of mules, lengthening to inconvenience the line of march.

The whole army was said to consist of 7000 cavalry and 31,000 infantry.

But we should not have been dissatisfied with our allies, *malgré* their appearance, or even their rags, had we felt any reason to confide in them. The men were evidently capable of "all that man dare," but the appearance of their officers at once bespoke their not being fit to lead them to the attempt. These not only did not look like soldiers, but not even like gentlemen; and it was difficult, from their mean and abject appearance, particularly among the infantry, to guess from what class of society they could have been taken. Few troops will behave well if those to whom they ought to look up are undeserving respect; and on this principle we might, at Oropesa, have predicted coming events, as far as the conduct of the Spanish soldiers was concerned. But besides their general inefficiency, we found their moral feeling different from what we expected. The preceding two years had made a great alteration in the feeling of the nation;

the burst of enthusiasm was but momentary, and being only fed by accidental victory, soon subsided on a reverse of fortune. Far from their army evincing devotion, or even the most common courage in their country's cause, they were more often guilty, individually and collectively, of the most disgraceful cowardice.

The inefficiency of the officers spread to the staff, and we hourly regretted that the revolution had not occasioned a more complete *bouleversement*, so as to bring forward fresh and vigorous talents from all classes. The proof that this opinion was just, was evinced by none of the regular military showing themselves worthy of command. Indeed, with the exception of a few self-made soldiers among the Guerillas, who had risen from among the farmers and peasantry, it would be difficult to point out during the whole war any officer, whose opinion, even in his own department, or on the most trivial military subject, was worthy of being asked.

The Cortes ruling for Ferdinand, and continuing the old system, formed one of the causes of the want of success of the Spaniards. They had to meet youthful Generals and the fresh energies of France with all the improvements of modern warfare, by old besotted and prejudiced Generals, whose armies were formed of obsolete principles,

while the system of an *ancien régime* of a decrepit Government continued to cramp every step to improvement. To these were added that blind pride and self-vanity, which made them still consider themselves what history and tradition had represented their forefathers and nation. No proofs of inferiority would open their eyes, and without reflection or consideration they rushed from one error and misfortune into others, benefiting by no experience, and disdaining to seek aid or improvement from those capable of restoring them to efficiency.

Had they placed their armies at our disposal, and allowed the introduction of the active and intelligent British officers into command, their regular army might have become as celebrated in after-ages for the defence of the Peninsula, as the Portuguese or their own Guerillas ; while at present, with the exception of their irregular warfare and defence of cities, their military character, during a period so brilliant for their allies, both Portuguese and British, appears absolutely contemptible. The army which we joined at Oropesa, in addition to its other drawbacks, was headed by a general as decrepit in mind as body. To abilities not superior to the most common intellect he united the greatest fault in a commander of an army, that of indecision, while every

act bespoke his suspicion and jealousy of his allies and their commander.

Attached to this army was an example, in the person of Lord Macduff, of one of those gallant spirits, who occasionally shaking off the indolence of wealth, volunteer to aid some soul-stirring cause. His Lordship had the rank of a Spanish Colonel.

On the 21st, the two Commanders-in-Chief dined together, and in return for the military spectacle Cuesta had given to Sir Arthur at Casa de Puertos, when he visited him from Placentia, the British troops, with the exception of Gen. M'Kenzie's division on the advance, were drawn out in the evening for his inspection. The mounting on horseback to proceed to the review, showed how ill-fitted was Cuesta for the activity of war. He was lifted on his horse by two grenadiers, while one of his aide-de-camps was ready on the other side to conduct his right leg over the horse's croup, and place it in the stirrup! Remarks were whispered at this moment, that if his mental energy and activity did not compensate for his bodily infirmity, Sir Arthur would find him but an incapable coadjutor. The Spanish General passed along the line from left to right, just as the night fell, and we saw him put com-

fortably into an antiquated square-cornered coach, drawn by nine mules, to proceed to his quarters.

On the morning of the 22d, we came in sight of the town of Talavera de la Reyna, which has since become so celebrated in English history. The town, seen about three miles distant, was embosomed in trees and inclosures, while the scarp'd hills on the right marked the course of the Tagus. The inclosures ended about a mile to the left of the town, joining some low, open, undulating hills, which stretched to some valleys and higher ridges. This open country communicated with an extensive plain in front of the town, across which passed the road from Oropesa, being gradually lost as it approached Talavera in the vineyards and woods. In the midst of this plain were posted about 800 or 1000 French cavalry, who, with the utmost indifference, were dismounted, feeling assured that a few skirmishers would check the advance of the Spanish cavalry in their front. These, under the Duke d'Albuquerque, had crossed the Tagus at the Puente del Arzobispo, and had arrived early opposite the French advance. Instead of being anxious to show their Allies their activity when at so little cost, being five or six times more numerous than the enemy, they made no attempt

to drive them in, but contented themselves with deploying into several long lines, making a very formidable appearance. With feelings of astonishment we rode on to the skirmishers, who consisted of mounted Guerillas, dressed like the farmers of the country. We expected to see them closely and successfully engaged, having heard they were peculiarly adapted for petty warfare; but we found them utterly incapable of coping with the enemy's *tirailleurs*, who were driving them almost into a circle. They were so careless and inexpert in the use of their arms, that one of them nearly shot, by accident, an English officer near him.

The Spaniards (from the commencement) thus continued skirmishing for four hours,* until Gen. Anson's brigade arrived, which they allowed at once, and as a matter of course, without any reference or notice, to pass through the intervals of their squadrons; at the same time these heroes notified their own want of efficiency and spirit, by acknowledging and paying tribute to both in their allies, by a profusion of *vivas*!

* In the Author's original copy of his Journal, written a few days after, he finds the conduct of the Spaniards on this occasion thus noticed:—"and it is my belief they would have continued till *now*, if we had not aided them."

On our advancing, the French drew off to the left of the town along the open ground, skirting the inclosures, and exchanging shots with our skirmishers. The Spaniards kept to the right along the great road, and could scarcely be brought by the intercession of British officers to enter the town, from whence they learned a body of 4 or 500 infantry had just retired. Brig. General Charles Stewart, who happened to be on the spot, persuaded their officers to follow their retreat along the fine Madrid road, which was one hundred and fifty yards wide. The enemy were overtaken retiring in two small columns, and to the attack of one General Stewart led the Spanish cavalry. The result, as indeed all we saw on this day of our allies, was a proof of their total want, not only of discipline, but of courage. On this and two succeeding attempts, (to which the English general headed them), on receiving the enemy's fire, when the principal danger was past, they pulled up and fled in every direction; yet in Cuesta's account of this affair, he called it an "*intrepid charge*."

Cruelty and cowardice are ever combined, and these same Spaniards who had thus avoided closing with the unmaimed enemy, murdered in cold blood a few wounded and dying men their column left in the road when they retired, who

were struck down by the artillery which was brought up after the cavalry's repulse. Their barbarity was even heightened by accompanying each stab with invectives and comments on their victims' never again seeing their homes or Paris. On the left the enemy retired before our cavalry, about four miles beyond the town. Anson's brigade made an attempt to charge about 1,500 of their cavalry, but they were found unassailable, having taken post beyond the bed of the Alberche, which, running for about two miles at right angles with the Tagus, empties itself into that river. The enemy allowed them to come close, and then opened a fire of four guns and two howitzers, which occasioned some small loss before they could withdraw out of fire. One of the horses of this brigade, the hip and leg of which was carried off, and its entrails trailing on the ground, recovered itself on three legs, and tried to take its place again in squadron.

The enemy had tirailleurs in the underwood near the river, and were very jealous of its banks, opening a fire of artillery on all who showed themselves. Sir Arthur and head-quarter staff came unexpectedly in the afternoon under a fire of some light guns on the right in front of the Spaniards, and one of several four-pound shots whizzed close over the General's head. The

troops were ordered to bivouack in the neighbourhood of Talavera, and General M'Kenzie's division was pushed on to the front in the neighbourhood of an old ruined building, at the angle of the Alberche, where it turned east. It was evident that the enemy were in force on the opposite side of the river; and a ridge of hills, above 800 yards from the bank, sloping towards it, offered them a very suitable defensive position. Its left rested on the Tagus, and its right was secured by the turning of the Alberche, and some difficult wooded ridges beyond. Their strength could not exceed 23,000 men, being the troops which had fallen back from the south of the Tagus, not having been joined by any troops from Madrid or Aranjuez.

We fully expected a battle on the following day, and about twelve o'clock on the 23rd, the first and third division got under arms, and advanced in the direction of the enemy's right, while the rest of the army were ready to move at a moment's notice; but, unfortunately, Sir Arthur had to overcome the wavering conduct of his confederate General, who appeared quite unaware of the use of time or opportunity in military operations. He could not be brought so to decide on attack, that Sir Arthur could feel secure of the Spaniards making a simultaneous attack with his

army, or that the British might not be left to gain the day alone. The bivouack of Cuesta was on the road to Madrid, about three-quarters of a mile from the Alberche, where, on the cushions taken out of his carriage, he sat, the picture of mental and physical inability.

Two soldiers stood near to aid or support him in any little necessary operation, and the scene would have been ridiculous had it not been painful, as we saw the tide, which, "when taken at its flood," might, nay, would "lead us on to fortune" and victory, fast ebbing, without our taking advantage of it. After considerable suspense, it was universally reported throughout the army, that on being pressed and driven to his last excuse, Cuesta pleaded that it was Sunday, at the same time promising to attack at daylight the next morning; and our troops were in consequence ordered back to their bivouacks. It may be fairly considered that pride had considerable weight on this occasion. Cuesta was a true Spaniard, and disliked the suggestion of an English general in his own country, and, with recollections of two hundred and fifty years before, could not bring his ideas down to present changes and circumstances. These feelings were national, and ever evinced, and it was only very late in the war, after the Spaniards found they

had not an officer to lead their armies, and they despaired of finding one, that they consented to place Sir Arthur at their head. Sir Arthur deserves as much credit for keeping his temper during his six years' intercourse with the Spanish Government and officers, as for the general conduct of the war. When we reflect on promises broken and engagements violated, involving the safety of his army, the honour of his character, and his credit as an officer, and yet know of no quarrel that extended (if any existed) beyond correspondence or negotiation, future ages are bound to give our Commander credit for unbounded placidity of temperament.

Though sorely annoyed by this determination, the officers could not let pass without ridicule the incongruity we had observed within the last three days in the old gentleman's proceedings. It was impossible not to notice the Spanish General going out to battle, to within half a mile of the advanced-posts, in a carriage drawn by nine mules, and the precautions to preserve him from the rheumatism, like those taken by delicate ladies, in our humid climate, at a *fête champêtre*, in placing the carriage cushions on the grass. To these the Spanish Commander-in-Chief was supported by two grenadiers, who let him drop on them, as his knees were too feeble to

attempt reclining without the chance, nay certainty, of a fall. Yet this was the man to whom the Cortes had entrusted their armies, but who ought (if he did not himself feel his own inability), to have been removed without a moment's delay after the first trial. They had only one excuse; the year before had made common honesty a virtue, and they forgot every other requisite, in a desire to avoid treachery.

We began, however, to have some hope on the evening of the 23rd, when orders were delivered out for attack the next morning at daylight. General Sherbrooke was to move at two in the morning, while the remainder of the army was to rendez-vous in rear of the third division, at the angle of the Alberche. The British column of attack, with the third division at its head, supported by General Anson's brigade, and followed by the first, second, and fourth divisions, was to attack the enemy's right, the Spaniards were to force the troops on the heights crossed by the road to Madrid, while the remainder of the British and the whole of the Spanish cavalry were to cross the river on the open ground in the enemy's front. No drums or trumpets were to sound. The columns for attack were formed before daybreak on the 24th,

and the left column, which was to cross the river and ascend the heights round the enemy's right and opposite the village of Casaleguas, was already on its march, when it was discovered the enemy had retired during the night.

While this event proved the effect of procrastination in warfare, it was to be deeply lamented on every account. The enemy, the day before, not consisting of above 22,000 men, had most imprudently offered us battle before the reinforcements from Madrid or la Mancha had reached him, and, if he had been attacked, must have been annihilated. We had near 18,000 British and 36,000 Spaniards, of whom 10,000 were horse, and, the position once forced, they would have had to retire across an open plain of many leagues, pursued by a victorious enemy and a superior cavalry.

Colonel Delancey had gained and continued in the rear of the enemy all night, and joined us at daylight with a French officer he had taken. We entered their variously-hutted camps across the river, which we found arranged with comfort and taste. Their army, on arriving from the line of the Tagus, had found the ripe wheat standing, and, regardless of its value, had not only thatched, but made whole huts, with the corn in the ear,

which, hanging down, shed the grain on the ground as we passed along and between them. They had built with boughs of trees an immense *Salle de Spectacle*, and formed, by cutting down and removing the largest olive trees, and sticking their pointed ends into the ground, an avenue, leading up to it, of some length—an act more wanton and reprehensible than that of taking the unthrashed corn, as the fruit of the olive is not produced under several years' growth.

Shy as Cuesta was of coming to blows with the enemy when in his front, he became most anxious for his pursuit when at a distance and in retreat. Without considering that Victor was only falling back on reinforcements, he ordered his army to advance, (as if the French were in full retreat for the Ebro,) and established his posts on the 25th at Torrijos. Had not the English General taken quite a different view of the subject, it would have been most imprudent, if not impossible to advance, as provisions began to fail us. The Spaniards, far from aiding our commissariat, took no precautions whatever to prepare food for 18,000 additional mouths, and our position threatened to be untenable for want of food.

Sir Arthur, in consequence, declined making any forward movement, and contented himself

with pushing two divisions of infantry across the Alberche, and posting them at Casaleguas. In the meanwhile the enemy were concentrating their various corps. The reserve, and the Guards from Madrid left that capital with King Joseph on the 22d at night, and joined the 4th *corps d'armée*, under Sebastiani, at Toledo. These united on the 25th, between Torrijos and Toledo, with the corps under Victor, and formed an army of 45 to 48,000 men, after a garrison of 2,000 had been left in Toledo. This small force was sufficient to cover any advance of the Spaniards from La Mancha, as Vanegas frittered away the time to no purpose, while Madrid was overawed by General Belliard, entrenched in the Retiro.

On the junction of these armies, Cuesta saw too late his mistake in so inconsiderately advancing from the neighbourhood of the British, and before he could withdraw his most advanced corps, became engaged with the enemy. The cavalry Regiment of Villa Viciosa, drawn up in an enclosure surrounded by a deep ditch, with but one means of egress, was hemmed in by the enemy and cut to pieces, without a possibility of escape. A British officer of Engineers saved himself by his English horse taking at a leap the barrier which surrounded the Spaniards, and which their horses were incapable of clearing. The Spa-

niards, on the 26th, fell back towards the Alberche and Talavera, in such confusion that it can only be compared to a flight, while the enemy followed with the evident intention of bringing the Allies to battle.

Every one now felt its approach, and some little preparations were made to strengthen a position which Sir Arthur had selected, resting on Talavera. These consisted in placing some of the Spanish heavy guns in battery on the main road, in front of the Madrid gate, and throwing up some barricades on the different approaches to the town. A breastwork was commenced on a small rising ground in a little plain, at the spot where the flanks of the British and Spanish would unite, about the centre of the Allied army. These were the only attempts at entrenchment, and the last was not completed. All the troops were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to move at a moment's notice.

On the 27th the British cavalry were ordered to the front, to cover the retreat of the Spaniards and of our own divisions across the Alberche. About mid-day the enemy's army began to show itself, and while our cavalry withdrew to the right bank of the river, in the open ground, the 5th division fell back from Casaleguas, through a woody country, to the same spot, near an old

ruined house, the Casa de Salinas, which they had occupied before the enemy retreated. Before re-crossing the Alberche, they set fire to the old hutted camps of the enemy, the smoke from which rose so thickly as completely to hide from view the country beyond and to the west of the village of Casaleguas. The two brigades of the 5th division lay upon their arms in front of this ruin, the highest part of which overlooked the surrounding trees, offering a view of the country. Sir Arthur dismounted, and, leaving his horse standing below, scrambled with some difficulty up the broken building, to reconnoitre the advancing enemy. Though ever as gallant, we were by no means such good soldiers in those days as succeeding campaigns made us, and sufficient precautions had not been taken to ascertain what was passing within the wood (on the skirt of which the division was posted,) and between it and the ford below Casaleguas.

But the enemy had crossed, under cover of the smoke from the burning huts, a very large force of infantry, and, gradually advancing, opened a fire so suddenly on our troops lying on the ground, that several men were killed without rising from it. This unexpected attack threatened the greatest confusion, little short of dismay, but the steadiness of the troops, particularly the 45th,

prevented disorder, and gave time for Sir Arthur and his staff to withdraw from the house and mount their horses. Sir Arthur's escape, may, however, be considered most providential. The troops were withdrawn from the wood into the plain, but after we had lost many officers and men. As this was the enemy's first attack, and might, by our withdrawing, be considered successful, it was peculiarly unfortunate, from adding to the enemy's confidence in attacking our army. These two brigades, being supported by General Anson's cavalry, gradually fell back towards our army.

The enemy now crowded the heights, extending from Casaleguas to the Tagus, with vast bodies of troops, accompanied with quantities of artillery. These crossed at the various fords on the Alberche, to the plain west of it; while some of their cavalry, in the loosest order, came in crowds through the woods, following our advanced corps as they gradually withdrew to our position, of which, as we approached the chosen ground, the principal features began to show themselves. Their horse artillery soon overtook us in our retreat, and opened a heavy and constant fire, particularly of shells, under which the troops formed on their ground. As the enemy closed on our position, our different divisions were seen bur-

rying to the post assigned them, which formed the left wing of the Allies; and some anxiety was felt for the arrival of the troops who were to defend a towering height, which, it was evident, would be the key of the position.

The men, as they formed and faced the enemy, looked pale, but the officers, riding along their line, only of two deep, on which all our hopes depended, observed they appeared not less cool and tranquil than determined. In the mean while the departing sun showed by his rays the immense masses moving towards us, while the last glimmering of twilight proved their direction to be across our front towards the left, leaving a sensation of anxiety and doubt if they would not be able to attack that point even before our troops, which had not yet arrived, were up. The darkness, only broken in upon by the bursting shells and flashes of the guns, closed quickly upon us, and it was the opinion of many that the enemy would rest till morning. But this was soon placed beyond doubt, by the summit of the height on our left being suddenly covered with fire, and for an instant it was evident the enemy had nearly, if not completely, made a lodgment in our line. This attack was made by three regiments of the division of Ruffin, the 24th, 96th, and 9th, but of which, the enemy say, the last only

reached the summit, the very citadel of our position.

They had marched, without halting, up the rise of the hill, and came upon the German Legion, who had, having been informed they were to the rear of General Hill's division, and believing they were in a second line, lain down on their arms, and when the enemy topped the hill, *en masse*, many were asleep. But General Hill's corps had not arrived, and the Germans were first roused by the enemy seizing them as prisoners, or firing into them at *brûle-pourpoint*. The flashes of the retiring fire of the broken and surprised Germans marked the enemy's success, and the imminent danger of our army. General Sherbrooke, posted in the centre, with the promptitude required in such an emergency, ordered the regiments of the brigade next to the Germans to wheel into open column, and then, facing them about, was preparing to storm the hill, with the rear-rank in front, when the brigade of Gen. Donkin by a brilliant charge restored the height to its proper owner, also driving the French from the top of the hill into the valley, with immense loss, and the colonel of the 9th regiment terribly wounded. A second attack was afterwards repelled by the timely arrival of the division of

Gen. Hill, Colonel Donkin's brigade having taken ground to its right. There was some fear that the enemy, when the Germans had been driven back, had carried off the only heavy guns we had with our army, but fortunately they had been withdrawn at dusk from the brow of the hill. Major Fordice, of the Adj.-Gen. department, an officer of great promise, fell in retaking these heights, with many valuable officers and men.

After this attack was repulsed, the enemy remained quiet, awaiting the morn which was to decide the fate of the battle. The British light infantry was thrown out to the front, with sentries still more advanced towards the enemy. This necessary precaution, coupled with the inexperience of our troops, principally militia-men, produced a heavy loss, from the jealousy they felt of all in their front, after this night attack. This was increased by the constant word "*stand up*" being passed along the line, and on more than one occasion it led to an individual soldier firing at some object in his front, which was taken up by the next, and so passed, like, and to appearance being a running wildfire, down the front of one or more regiments, till stopped by the officers. In this, the troops unfortunately forgot their light infantry in front, and many

brave officers and men fell a sacrifice to the fire of their comrades ; amongst them was Colonel Ross of the Guards.

The Spaniards were not less on the alert than ourselves, but their anxiety not only extended to firing musquetry, but to salvos of the cannon placed in front of Talavera. On one occasion this was said to have originated from a cow having got loose and cantered up to their line. Our troops, however, stood firm to their ground, while regiments of the Spaniards, after giving a volley, quitted their position and fled through the gardens and enclosure, bearing down all before them, and were only brought into line again by degrees. One of these alarms about midnight, in front of Talavera, was so great, that a large portion of the troops posted in the front, left their ground, and rushed through the town, and in the midst of the crowd of fugitives was seen a certain square-cornered coach, the nine mules attached to it being urged to the utmost ; implying that its inmate was as anxious to escape as the meanest in the army.

Sir Arthur, surrounded by his staff, slept, wrapped in his cloak, on the open ground, in rear of the second line, about the centre of the British army. A hasty doze was occasionally taken, as more continued rest was disturbed by

alarm of different kinds,—while the reflections of others kept them waking. The bustle of the day had prevented a review of our situation, but, on being left to our own thoughts, it was impossible not to reflect on the awfully approaching crisis. We could not but feel that here was to be another trial of the ancient military rivalry of England and France; that the cool, constitutional, persevering courage of the former was again to be pitted against the more artificial, however chivalrous, though not less praiseworthy, bravery of the latter. This view of the relative valour of the two nations cannot be questioned, if we consider that the reminding the British of this moral quality is wholly unnecessary, and instead of language of excitement being constantly applied to our soldiery, that of control, obedience, and composure is solely recommended; while our ancient opponents are obliged incessantly to drive into the ears of their men, that they are nationally and individually the bravest of the human race. Hearing nothing else so flattering to their unbounded vanity, they become so puffed up by this eternal stimulant, as to be fully convinced of its truth, which, in consequence, makes their first attack tremendous.

Buonaparte, being aware of this weak point in their character, fed it in every way, and the ob-

ject of wearing a paltry piece of enamel gained him many battles. But this sort of created courage is not capable of standing a severe test, and the French have always been in their military character more Gauls than Franks; and what Cæsar said of the former eighteen centuries ago, is still applicable to the races now occupying their fine country. If stoutly opposed at first, this kind of courage not only diminishes but evaporates, and has, does, and will, ever fail before that of the British. As soldiers, taking the expression in its widest sense, they are equal, if not superior, to us in many points; but on one, that of individual constitutional courage, we rise far superior to them. It is remarkable how often they evince a knowledge of this, and in nothing more than their subterfuges of all kinds to keep it from resting on their minds. All France, aware of this inferiority, by all species of casuistry attempts to conceal it; and in order not to shock their national vanity, they blame every unsuccessful officer opposed to us, even should his dispositions be ever so good, and such as might, but for the courage of our men, have succeeded.

Buonaparte's conduct, after Vittoria, was directed to work on this feeling, and, by sacrificing the officers to the self-vanity of the troops, established for a time the *moral* of the army, by

making those who had fled like sheep at Vittoria, fight us again, though unsuccessfully, with renewed spirit. Besides the bravery of the two nations, no less was the plain of Talavera to try the merit of two systems, and prove the value of different means and education in forming a powerful and efficient military. It was not only to be shown if a chivalrous enthusiasm, and a confidence founded on vanity was to overcome natural and patriotic courage, but if a sense of duty, inculcated by a real discipline, was to sink under feelings created by an absence of control and a long train of excess and military license. It was whether an organized army, worthy of a civilized period, and state of warfare, should not overcome a military cast grown up in the heart of Europe, (from the peculiarity of the times and circumstances,) little better than the Bandits led by Bourbon to the walls of Rome in the sixteenth century. The system on which the French armies were formed was so demoralizing and pernicious in its effects, that the army of Buonaparte ought not to be considered as the national force of France, but that of a conqueror, like Ghenghis Khan, or Tamerlane, of a more civilized age and quarter of the world. Like those scourges, the ruler of the French existed by upholding that soldiery the times

had first created, and which his ambition subsequently fostered, and, in perpetuating their attachment to his person by leading them to victory and plunder; in consequence, robbery was not only overlooked but permitted, and an economist of the French army has since dared in print to excuse its atrocities. This, it is true, is written by one of the revolutionary school, but it will be, (as long as the work is read,) a perpetual disgrace to the army whose acts he records.* All discipline sank under this state of things. Coercion was neither necessary nor prudent, where the views of all were directed to the same lawless objects; and the military code was rather a bond of union and companionship, fostering a spurious glory, or ambition, and a thirst and hope of reward in unshackled military license and execution, than a collection of laws respecting the rights and claims of human nature.

The quickness and intelligence of the French soldiery pointed out the necessity of an obedience to their officers, whom they considered as leading them to objects equally desirable to all; and thus actuated, far from having to re-

* It is needless to say, this alludes to Foy's Introduction to the War of the Peninsula.

ceive orders, they readily anticipated them. A Bedouin robber does not require the positive commands of his chief to do his utmost to destroy the guards, or to plunder the camels of a caravan; and no more did the French, with gain or impure military fame in view, require farther stimulus or direction.

But these various causes so suited the French, that they had the effect, since the Revolution, of raising their armies to the summit of fame, while their successes over the continental troops had made them universally dreaded. They felt this, which increased their confidence; and the army before us, sleeping on the opposite side of the ravine, was strongly imbued with this impression, being formed of the fine regiments of the Italian army, who had so often conquered under Buonaparte, and subsequently marched from one victory to another. Neither the corps of Victor nor Sebastiani, nor the guard or reserve under Desolles, from Madrid, had formed parts of the armies defeated by us at Vimiera or Corunna, nor had any recollections of our prowess to shake that good opinion of themselves, in which the principal strength of the French armies consists.

Though no fears could be entertained for the result, dependent on the brave fellows

lying around us, we could not but regret that they were not composed of troops as fine as those who accompanied Sir John Moore.

We could not hide from ourselves that our ranks were filled with young soldiers, being principally the second battalions of those English regiments which had embarked at Corunna, and consisting of draughts from the militia that had never seen an enemy. With the exception of the Guards and a few others, there were more knapsacks with the names of militia regiments upon them, than of numbered regular regiments. Indeed we felt, no contrast could be stronger than that of the two armies. The ideas of England have never run wild on military glory. We more soberly consider our army rather as a necessary evil than an ornament and boast; and as an appeal to brute force and arms is a proof of barbarism, so ought the general diffusion of the former sentiment in a community to be viewed as conclusive evidence of advance to civilization and intelligence; and instead of directing the talents, or drawing forth the best blood of a people to be wasted in the field, a well-wisher to his country ought to desire them to be retained at home for the general advantage. But, however secure in ourselves, we recollected that we formed but one-

third of the Allied army, and that 36,000 men lay in the same line, every action of whom had led us to consider them as more likely to occasion some common reverse than a happy termination to our operations. We were convinced that if attacked, even in their strong and almost impregnable position, it was most likely to be attended by their immediate flight, which would leave the whole of the enemy to direct his efforts upon us single-handed. In addition, a certain degree of coolness had grown up between the two commanders; and Sir Arthur must have felt that the weakness of his ally by his side was not less to be dreaded than the strength of his enemy in his front. The prospect on the eve of the 28th July, 1809, was thus, though far from hopeless, by no means one of encouragement or sanguine expectation.

The rest of all the officers lying around Sir Arthur was hasty and broken, and interrupted by the uneasiness of the horses held at a distance, and the arrival of deserters, a few of whom came over during the night. They generally informed us, that we were to be attacked at day-light, and that the corps that stormed the hill had consisted of 6000 men. Our glances were constantly directed towards the point from whence the sun was to rise for the last time

on many hundreds who were here assembled within a mile around, while Sir Arthur, occasionally asking the hour, showed he looked for daylight with as much anxiety as any of us. Just before day, we quietly mounted our horses and rode slowly towards the height, where we arrived just as the light allowed us to see the opposite side of the ravine beneath us covered with black indistinct masses. Every instant rendered them more visible, and the first rays of the sun showed us Sebastiani's division opposite our centre, Victor's three divisions at our feet, with the reserve, guard, and cavalry extending backward to the wood near the Alberche. Our eyes were, however, principally attracted by an immense solid column opposite but rather to the left of the hill, evidently intended for attack. Its front was already covered with tirailleurs, ready to advance at the word, and who saw before them the dead bodies of their comrades, who had fallen the night before, strewn the ground. The gray of the morning was not broken in upon by a single shot from either side, and we had time to observe our position, (which had not been completely occupied before dark on the preceding eve,) and how the troops were posted.

The distance from the Tagus to the height

on our left, which overlooked a deep valley, bounded beyond by some sharp and rugged hills, was little less than two miles. The right of the Allied army rested on the town of Talavera and the river. About half the ground from our right to a little beyond the centre was flat, and covered with woods and vineyards, but where these ceased, the remainder of the country was open, and gradually rose to the foot of our important conical hill on the left.

A rill ran along the whole front of our line, and in that part of the ground which was open and undulating, it passed through a ravine, the brow of which was taken advantage of in posting our troops. The Spaniards, from being incapable of moving, were posted in heavy columns in the most difficult country, till they joined our right, which was in an open space, though in its front and rear were inclosures. At this point had been commenced a little redoubt, which however remained imperfect, and was the only "*intrenchment*" of those with which the French, in their accounts, as an excuse for their defeat, have so liberally strengthened our line. But as every thing is sacrificed by them to vanity, truth cannot be expected alone to escape.

On the right of the British was posted the

fourth division, under Sir A. Campbell, supported by Sir S. Cotton's brigade of cavalry; on their left commenced the first division, of which the Guards were on the right. The remainder of this division, consisting of Brig.-Gen. Cameron's brigade and the Germans, extended across the most open ground, and joined on the left to the brigade of Colonel Donkin and the second division, clustered round the height for its defence. The other brigade of Gen. M'Kenzie was placed in the second line. The remainder of the cavalry had bivouacked at some distance to the rear, and were not come up. The enemy were employed from daylight in placing opposite our centre thirty pieces of cannon on the opposite side of the ravine, but not a shot was fired on either side, and the whole looked as if the armies had met for a review. But the calm augured the coming storm, and the quiet evinced that all were aware of the great approaching struggle, and that it was useless to throw away a casual fire, or destroy individuals, where salvos alone and the death of thousands could decide the day. When the vast column we had seen in the dusk was considered ready, a single cannon shot from the centre of the enemy's batteries was the signal

for its advance, and for the opening of all their guns. A shower of balls instantly fell on all parts of our position, and the smoke, (the wind being east, and the damp of the morning preventing its rising,) was blown across the ravine, and completely enveloped us in a dense fog. But we had seen the forward movement intended for our dislodgment, and knew, under cover of this cannonade and smoke, it was advancing up the face of the hill. It consisted of a close column of battalions, of the same division of Ruffin which had attacked the night before.

Gen. Hill, with the brigades of Tilson and Stewart, which had already successfully tried their strength with these same troops, was ready to receive them. The Buffs, 48th, and 66th, advanced to the brow of the hill, wheeling round to meet them with their arms ported, ready to rush on the ascending foe as soon as perceived through the intense smoke. They were not long in suspense, and without a moment's hesitation, by a desperate charge and volley, they overthrew, as they topped the hill, the enemy, who fled in the utmost confusion and consternation, followed by our troops, even across the ravine. Here they rallied, and, after an exchange of sharp firing, our regiments were withdrawn

again to their vantage ground. Had the cavalry been present, the victory might have been completed at this early hour, but they had not come in from their bivouack. As the smoke and tumult cleared off, and the troops were seated behind the summit of the hill, we found our loss considerable, and that Gen. Hill had been forced to quit the field from a shot in the head. The dead of the enemy lay in vast numbers on the face of the hill, and had been tall, healthy, fine young men, well-limbed, with good countenances; and as proof of their courage, (the head of their column having reached within a few yards of the top of the hill before being arrested,) the bodies lay close to our ranks. The face of the height was furrowed out into deep ravines by the water rushing down its steep sides during the rains, and the dead and wounded of both nations lay heaped in them.* Musquetry almost ceased after this defeat, but the cannonade continued; our centre and right suffering considerably, though in the other parts of the line, as our shots were plunging, while theirs were directed

* We were occupied after this attack in carrying away our wounded in blankets, by four or five soldiers, and within a short time the number of unfortunate men assembled round our field hospital, a small house and enclosure behind our centre; barely out of cannon shot, proved our heavy loss.

upwards, it was not so deadly. It continued for above an hour after the repulse, and showed us the inferiority of our calibre. All our guns, with the exception of one brigade of heavy, were miserably *light* six pounders, while the French returned our fire with eights and twelves.

As the weather was dreadfully hot, and it was impossible to know how long we should occupy this ground, orders were given to bury the men who had fallen the night before and in the morning attack, lying around the hill interspersed with the living.

The entrenching tools were thus employed, and it was curious to see the soldiers burying their fallen comrades, with the cannon shot falling around, and in the midst of them, leaving it probable that an individual might thus be employed digging his own grave ! Gradually, however, the fire slakened, and at last wholly ceased, and war appeared as much suspended as before daylight and previously to the attack of the morning. The troops on the advance talked together, and the thirsty of both armies met at the bottom of the ravine, and drank from the same stream. There was also a well at the foot of the hill to the left, where the same water was divided among the collected of both nations around its brink.

About nine it was evident that the enemy had no intention of disturbing us for some time, as

their numerous fires proved they were not inclined to fight again on empty stomachs. This was a painful sight to us, who felt acutely for our starving soldiery, who began to experience the most pinching want. All the promises of the Spaniards had ended in nought. They had made no arrangements to act up to their word, and starvation began to stare us in the face. Generally, however, it was borne by our men with philosophy, but one hungry soldier became almost troublesome, and, close to Sir Arthur and his staff, said, "It was very hard that they had nothing to eat," and wished that they might be let to go down and fight, "for when engaged, they forgot their hunger." The poor fellow was, however, at last persuaded to retire. Till about eleven o'clock all remained quiet, but about that hour immense clouds of dust were seen rising above the woods towards the Alberche opposite the centre of the Allied army, implying movements of large bodies of troops. This indicated the preparing for a general assault, and was occasioned by Sebastiani's corps forming a column of attack.* As the enemy's troops approached, the

* It is remarkable how the accounts differ respecting the hour of attack. Sir Arthur says about twelve, another relates mentions two, and Jourdan, in his interesting letter, places it as late as four o'clock.

cannonade was renewed, and our inferiority of metal was so evident, that a brigade of Spanish 12 pounders was borrowed from Cuesta. The fellows attached to these guns showed good spirit, and, posting their guns on the side of the hill, were found most effective. The French, at times, had the most exact range of the height, and threw shot and shells upon it with terrible precision. One shell killed four horses, held by a man, who escaped uninjured. Their fuses, however, often burned too quick, exploding the shells high in the air and forming little clouds of smoke. It was curious that the enemy changed their fire from the troops to our artillery, or from our batteries to our line, whenever we gave them the example.

But the dust drew near in the woods, and a vast column was seen preparing to advance against Sir A. Cameron's brigade in the open ground. General Sherbrooke had cautioned his division to use the bayonet, and when the enemy came within about fifty yards of the Guards, they advanced to meet them, but on their attempting to close the enemy by a charge, they broke and fled. The regiment on their left, the 83rd, made a simultaneous movement, driving the enemy with immense loss before them; but the impetuosity of the Guards led to endangering the day. The

flying enemy led them on till they opened a battery on their flank, which occasioned so heavy a loss, that the ranks could not be formed after the disorder of pursuit, and, on being ordered to resume their ground, produced confusion.

The enemy instantly rallied and followed them, and were so confident of victory, that their officers were heard to exclaim, "*Allons, mes enfans ; ils sont tous nos prisonniers.*" But Sir Arthur had foreseen the difficulty in which the Guards were likely to become entangled, and had ordered the 48th from the height to their support. This gallant regiment arrived in the rear of the Guards at the moment when they were retiring in confusion, pressed by the enemy, on the line of position. They allowed the Guards to pass through them, and then, breaking in upon the enemy, gave them a second repulse. The Guards quickly formed in the rear, and moved up into the position ; and their spirit and appearance of good humour and determination after having lost in twenty minutes five hundred men, was shown by their giving a hurrah, as they took up their ground ; and a report soon after that the enemy's cavalry was coming down upon them, was answered by a contemptuous laugh along their ranks.

The remainder of Sherbrooke's division, after repulsing the enemy, had retired to their former ground in excellent order. The enemy had made an attack at the same time on the fourth division; they accompanied this by a *ruse*, which nothing but the determination of our troops could have overcome. Trusting to the similarity of uniform, they advanced towards the 7th, 97th, and 53d, crying out they were Spaniards, and repeating the Spanish cry of *Vivan los Ingleses!* Though this did not deceive our officers, it did the men, who, under this false impression, could not be brought to fire on them; this allowed their approaching quite close, when they gave their fire so unexpectedly, that it staggered our line, and even caused them to fall back. This was, however, only to exemplify the French proverb, *reculer pour mieux sauter*, as indignation and anger took place of surprise, and a spontaneous rush with the bayonet instantly threw the enemy into utter rout. A Spanish regiment of infantry, on the right flank of the fusileers, broke and fled on this attack; but the King's regiment of horse, with great gallantry, dashed into the wood in co-operation with our troops in pursuit. Several pieces of cannon fell into the hands of Gen. A. Campbell, and three were captured by the

Spanish cavalry, while the flight of the enemy was so rapid, that several others were left in their retreat.

Besides these attacks, the enemy's endeavours and intentions were extended along the whole British line, with the exception of the hill, which they did not again attack after the morning. We had not posted any troops in the valley, or on the hills on our left, the former being commanded, and the latter considered too distant; but it soon became evident that the enemy had turned their views to these points.

The Spanish division of Gen. Bassecourt was in consequence borrowed from Cuesta, and sent across the valley to oppose the enemy's light troops on the distant ridge. The French soon after advanced two heavy columns into the valley, consisting of the divisions of Vilelle and Ruffin, and two-thirds of our cavalry were ordered to occupy the valley opposite them. Gen. Anson's brigade arrived first, while the heavy brigade was moving from the rear of the centre to its support. The enemy's two columns advanced, supported by cavalry, threatened to turn our left, and orders, either positive or discretionary, were given to charge them if opportunity offered; these were either interpreted into direct orders, or considered as definitive, under particular circum-

stances, and the 23d regiment soon after advanced in line against one of the columns, the brigade of Laval, which had taken post with its flank against a house. This gallant regiment moved forward with great steadiness, and the squadron, (for the width of only one could embrace the front of the column,) on arriving within firing distance, received a well-directed volley. It seemed to stop them in their career—the whole country was instantly covered with horses galloping back without riders, and men straggling to the rear without horses, while a dense spot seen from the hill marked where the slaughtered lay.

Though this squadron was annihilated, the others dashed on, passed between and round the columns, and fell upon a brigade of cavalry in the rear, broke through them, and rushed on a second brigade beyond. Of these, some cut their way back, while many were slain or taken. Though this desperate charge cost the 23d two-thirds of its men and horses, it had the effect of astounding the enemy, who, seeing not only the 1st German, and the 3d and 4th dragoons prepared for a similar act, but the Spanish cavalry moving into the valley in support, and their efforts unsuccessful elsewhere, not only gave up all farther idea of penetrating in that quarter, but

seemed satisfied that it was imprudent and hopeless any longer to continue the contest. But for being on the defensive, the gaps in our lines, which now forcibly showed themselves, by the regiments not covering one-third of their former ground, would have made us come to the like conclusion; and it was no unpleasing sight to see them begin gradually to draw off their infantry, and bring forward, to cover their retreat, their cavalry, which had been all day in numerous *échelons*, extending back to the woods. They formed several lines, and must have numbered not less than 9 or 10,000 cavalry, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow.

But the views of the British were attracted to a new enemy which had threatened occasionally during the day, and had gained great head soon after the defeat on the right and centre. The ripe corn and dry grass took fire from the cartridges and wadding, and hundreds of acres were rapidly consumed, involving in their conflagrations the more severely wounded and helpless; adding a new and horrid character to the misery of war.

It was so general, that it was a consolation to the friends of officers slain, to learn that their bodies, when found, did not bear the marks of being scorched or burned in their last moments!

But the attention of all was directed till dusk to the enemy's evident preparations for retreat, and during the night they drew off behind the Alberche, which river they had all crossed by the daylight of the 29th; on which morning, Brig.-Gen. R. Craufurd joined the army with 3000 men, and a troop of horse-artillery, and was pushed on to the old ruin, from which Sir Arthur had so narrowly escaped two days before. But these reinforcements, consisting of the 43d, 52d, and 95th, (the beginning of the celebrated light division,) did not make up for the heavy loss we had sustained during the 27th and 28th.

Out of 17,500 men we had lost 5,335, including Generals M'Kenzie and Langworth killed, and Gen. Hill, Sir H. Campbell, and Brig.-Gen. A. Campbell, wounded. This was two-sevenths of our force, and is, with the exception of Albuera, the heaviest list of casualties offered, for the men engaged, of any victorious army in modern war. The loss of the 23d Dragoons was remarkable from its extent; that fine regiment, which had only joined three weeks, being only able to assemble, after the action, one hundred men. Two officers and forty-six men and ninety-five horses were killed on the spot, and besides the numerous wounded, three officers, and about one hundred men were taken, in consequence of

penetrating into the enemy's supporting cavalry. The whole regiment was so reduced, as to be sent home to England, on our return to the Portuguese frontier.

The Spanish returns gave between 1300 and 1400 men, but this included their loss on the 25th in front of St. Ollala*.

The French army fell back across the Alberche, diminished not less than one-fifth, if not one-fourth of their effectives, their loss being indifferently rated from 10 to 14,000 men. Some of the little enclosures in front of the right of the British were choked with their dead, and in one little field more than 400 bodies were counted.

Besides the innumerable déad, vast numbers of wounded were left in our front; and many more stand of arms than the most sanguine rated their loss, were abandoned on the field of battle†. Nineteen pieces of cannon remained in our pos-

* Nous pûmes remarquer à l'occasion de ces deux affaires, le peu de cas que les Espagnols faisaient des Anglais; ils ne les surent aucun gré des efforts qu'ils firent à Talavera, et croyaient faire éloge de leur armée en disant qu'elle n'avait essuyé presque qu'aucune perte. Les Anglais de leur côté les méprisent souverainement, et sont honteux de les avoir pour Alliés.—*M.S. Journal of a French Officer taken at Badajoz.*

† It was said 17,000 were found.

session as trophies of our victory*. Besides these, they left in our possession several silk standards, but whether they had borne eagles or not it was difficult to say ; as, besides being much broken and torn when brought into head-quarters, the staff of one had been used as a poker to a bivouac fire. It was the custom of the French to unscrew their eagles, and for the eagle-bearers to conceal them about their person when in danger. Having only one to a regiment, and there being five battalions to each, every eagle taken by us during the war, may be considered as equivalent to five stand of colours, and the trophies at Whitehall as ten times more numerous than they appear.

It is a remarkable and curious instance of the instability of human institutions, that these idols of the French armies for so many years, and around which so much blood was spilt, only now exist as trophies to their conquerors.

This hard-fought battle was remarkable from the circumstance of almost the entire efforts of an army being directed on the troops of one nation

* A noble Peer, on the vote of thanks to the army, afterwards remarked, that the capture of these guns was no proof of a victory, as, he sagaciously observed, it might have been *convenient* for the enemy to leave them on the field of battle.

of their allied opponents. It is, perhaps, fortunate, that the rancour and vanity of the enemy led them to this conduct, as, had they forced the Spaniards from the difficult country on our right, our army would have been thrown off the Tagus, and had to combat the whole French army, with its communications threatened, if not cut off.

With the exception of occupying the ground, the dash of the regiment of King's cavalry, and the employment of a few battalions in skirmishing on the hills on our left, the Spaniards did nothing whatever*. But their previous behaviour had tended to make us uneasy during the whole battle, and so disgusted was Cuesta with some of his troops, that he ordered several officers and men to be shot for cowardice the next day. This battle gave the character to all the subsequent actions in the Peninsula. They were ever almost entirely of infantry and artillery, while the cavalry, which acted with such effect on the continent, did not assert its power. However brilliant Vimiera and Corunna, still Talavera must be considered as the place where the military character of the two nations was fairly brought to trial and proved. This battle proved

* "Les Espagnols seuls restaient paisibles spectateurs du combat," says a French author.

the total want of firmness of the enemy in meeting our troops with the bayonet, and offered an example, followed by others on every occasion, of their best troops flying like chaff before the wind, on the hostile troops arriving within charging distance.

The French would ever expose themselves to fire at the smallest distance as long as ourselves, but a hurra and a rush with the bayonet, within reach, caused their instant flight.

With the exception of a few desperate men at the rear of a flying column, or from accidental circumstances, scarce any bayonet wounds were exchanged during the whole war; and their dread of closing wasso strongly evinced in foggy weather, that a shout was sufficient, as at the pass of Maida in the Pyrenees, to disperse a forming column.

Indeed, our bayonets might as well have been of pasteboard, from their temper being so seldom tried, for the dread of them alone was sufficient to scatter the best troops of France. In fact it is a bad, if not useless weapon in their hands, and the Portuguese beat them with it on more than one occasion.

Brig.-Gen. Alexander Campbell had two horses shot under him, and though wounded through the thigh, continued on his horse till the close of the battle. Sir H. Campbell, who headed the brigade

of Guards, was wounded in the face, the ball entering the cheek and coming out behind the ear. Col. Gordon, of the 83d, was badly wounded in the neck, and when in the act of being removed to the rear, a shell fell into the blanket in which he was carried, and bursting, slew alike the wounded and his bearers. A man of the 87th, while lying down, was shot, the ball entering the head, and was alive five days after.

The incessant and terrible cannonade had created the most shocking wounds, and an unusual portion of wounded were not expected again to join the ranks. The standard of one of the regiments of Guards had three balls in its staff. The prisoners and deserters stated that, during the action, a Westphalian regiment, in the enemy's service, mutinied, but that they were reduced to obedience and marched to the rear.

The morning after the battle was employed in removing our numerous and suffering wounded into the convents and churches, now converted into hospitals. By requisitions of beds and blankets, within three days, principally through the exertion of the head of the medical staff, Dr. Frank, no patient was without a mattress. Nurses and orderlies were selected to attend, and Sir Arthur visited the hospitals himself. The num-

ber of deaths from wounds that proved mortal, obliged immense burial parties to be employed during the first three or four days in removing the bodies from the hospitals. Even in the case of the officers, it was only through the attention of their brother officers, who read the service themselves, that the usual funeral forms were used, while the men were interred without prayers, being generally placed in ditches and the bank dug in upon them.

The heat of the weather rendered as necessary a proper attention to the dead of the enemy, and the Spaniards burned a vast number of the slain; but the weather was too rapid for all exertion, and the tainted air was fraught with every horror, so that the quarters of some of the troops were forced to be changed. Though distressing to relate, it must not be overlooked, that the 29th was disgraced by the atrocious conduct of the Spaniards, in putting to death most of the enemy's wounded left in our front. The amount has been rated as high as one thousand, but it is certain several hundred were thus inhumanly butchered. One of our officers found a French officer badly wounded, and, on offering to seek aid, the poor fellow remarked, that he had no right to expect it, until our own numerous wounded were housed

and dressed. But during the search for assistance, the Spaniards had passed the spot, and he was found stabbed to death !

Sir Arthur felt he could not too soon thank the army which had so nobly aided his efforts, and on the 29th his Excellency issued a long order to that effect, naming distinguished officers and regiments. The enemy continued a rear guard on the Alberche till the night of the 31st July, when they retired through St. Ollala, and our patrols passed through that town : here our officers learned some curious details of the enemies' bearing, under the different feelings of confidence of success and the discouragement of subsequent defeat. In the house where the King had lodged, an instance was given highly creditable to Joseph. A caricature was discovered of El Rey Pepé, which created great indignation in those around Joseph's person, accompanied by threats and ill-treatment. The King, the next morning, on his departure, tendered his host a snuff-box, remarking, that he should be more careful of its contents than of the caricature ; on its being opened, it was found to contain the King's miniature.

We were prevented from moving after the enemy, not only on account of our numerous wounded, but from want of provisions. Our dif-

ficulties on this head greatly increased after the battle, and were felt to so great an extent, that the army in part became disorganized, from the ravenous callings for food overpowering all other considerations. While, it was said, comparative plenty reigned in the Spanish camp, our troops were driven to seek and take provisions by force, wherever they could find them; this led to such straggling from the camp, that on the 2d of August the rolls were ordered to be called every two hours. While our position was thus unsatisfactory and even doubtful, news reached headquarters that our rear was threatened by troops moving down from Castile and Leon. On the 30th a rumour (proved however to be anticipated) spread that the French had arrived in Placentia, and the anxiety became universal.

Our information at this time was less perfect than it afterwards became, and the various reports left the impression that it was Soult's corps alone of 12 to 15,000 men that was thus menacing our communication with Portugal. This however did not make our position untenable, as our army of between 15 and 16,000, was capable of defeating his force, if Cuesta could be persuaded to hold his ground, and keep in check the lately defeated army, and thus cover our hospitals. To this Cuesta agreed, and, ordering Gen. Bassecourt's

division to act as our advance, caused it to march to Oropesa on the 2d. Arrangements were made respecting the hospitals, and Col. M'Kinnon was left in their charge, with but thirty-four medical officers (all we could spare) to attend 5,000 sick and wounded.

We left Talavera on the 3d, under the full expectation of fighting the forces coming from the north, concentrating about Naval Moral. On our arrival at Oropesa on the evening of that day, Bassacourt was pushed on towards that place, and orders were given out implying active and immediate operations, by directing the troops to hold themselves in readiness to march by such orders as they might receive from the Quarter-master-general.

But the course of the night changed all our prospects. Sir Arthur received a despatch from Cuesta stating, that he had received information on which he could depend, that not only had Soult's corps moved from the north, but that it was accompanied by the two other corps, the 5th and 6th, and that he had, in consequence, determined to retire from Talavera. This implied the sacrifice to the enemy of all in our hospitals who had not the power of walking, as the Spaniards, on Col. M'Kinnon applying to them for means of transport, furnished only ten or a dozen carts,

while very many quitted the town empty. Col. M'Kinnon, thus under the painful necessity of leaving nearly 2,300 sick and wounded, gave directions for the rest to withdraw by a nearer road to the bridge of Arzobispo, than through Oropesa.*

This unexpected news added to Sir Arthur's difficulties; and while these were under consideration, they were greatly increased by the whole Spanish army coming in upon us, at daylight on the 4th, with their carts and baggage.

On this occasion the old General had not wanted decision, as was proved by the arrival of himself and army within a few hours after forming his opinion.

The intelligence of Cuesta proved most true; a junction of the three corps had taken place, and the King, before he left Madrid, had sent them orders on the 22d to advance on Placentia. The head-quarters of the 2d, 5th, and 6th corps were at Salamanca on the 27th of July, and directing their march on three succeeding days to the south, forced all the weak passes and posts, and arrived on the 1st of August, at Pla-

* We had the satisfaction of hearing after, that Victor, on entering Talavera, behaved with the greatest attention and kindness to those who, by the chance of war, had thus been left to his mercy and care.

centia, making prisoners 300 sick in the hospitals.

The Spanish troops, retiring before Soult, crossed the Tagus, and fortunately destroyed the bridge of boats at Almaraz. But the enemy only thought of intercepting and surrounding the British, and their advance reached Naval Moral on the 3d, but five leagues from Oropesa, thus cutting off the direct road by Almaraz to Portugal.

No time was now to be lost, as we were not only likely to be attacked from the west, but, in consequence of the retreat of the Spaniards, threatened with the advance of King Joseph, and his defeated army at Talavera, within three or four days : in which case we should have had, besides 36 to 38,000 from Madrid, 30 to 34,000 from Placentia.

But Sir Arthur soon decided, and gave directions, at four o'clock on the 4th, for all the baggage to proceed across the bridge of Arzobispo. This was preparatory to a similar movement of the army; and having recalled Bassecourt's division, the whole British force filed over to the left bank of the Tagus, where the wounded from Talavera arrived a short time before.

The Spaniards followed to the side of the river, but did not cross that evening. So nearly

had the enemy intercepted our retreat, that at dusk his cavalry interchanged some shots with our advance-posts, close to Arzobispo, and carried off one of our videttes. The Spaniards did not cross the next day ; but the British army proceeded down the river, by the same road where the enemy had turned Cuesta's flank before the battle of Medellin, in the preceding spring. This was rendered most necessary, as the occupation of Almaraz could alone secure a retreat upon Portugal ; and the pontoons, though removed, had been left but in the charge of some militia. Head-quarters on the 5th were near the village of Peretada de Gabern, and the 3rd division, which had been placed under the orders of General Craufurd, with the addition of his light brigade, was pushed by narrow paths across the mountain, and reached a point within two leagues of the passage over the Tagus.

On the 6th it reached Roman Gourdo, which secured this important position, and head-quarters moved on to Meza de Ibor, (the spot of Cuesta's unsuccessful affair on the 17th of March), and the following day to Deleytoza. It was now possible to halt with security ; from the pass at Almaraz being secured ; and in a large convent, about a mile from the town, a hospital was formed,

and it was found above 2,000 wounded had accompanied the army.

General A. Campbell had found his way in a huckster's tilted-cart, with a bed made in it, across the most difficult passes in the mountain.

The roads during three days' march were scarcely capable of transport, and the greatest difficulty was experienced in conveying the artillery, while the troops were often halted to cover their retreat.

As we moved over the high ridges, we had a most extensive view across the place we had traversed a fortnight before from Placentia, and saw the glittering of the arms, and the rising dust of the French columns moving on Oropesa.

Colonel Waters and Captain Mellish crossed the river, and reconnoitered the last of these columns, and learned from the peasants, that it was the third of the same size that had passed along that road within the preceding few days; thus fully confirming the information of the three corps having been directed on our rear.

Thus, as in the preceding year, the British had again drawn five *corps d'armée* of the eight in Spain upon them. Some of the troops from the north were not re-equipped after their losses in the north of Portugal, but the three corps had little short of 35,000 effectives. However pre-

precipitate the retreat of Cuesta, it would have been eventually necessary, for, although we could have checked on the 5th, 6th, and 7th, the successive arriving columns of the enemy from Naval Moral, (allowing time for the very desirable transport of many more of our wounded beyond Arzobispo), still our position would sooner or later have become untenable.

It may be conjectured that few armies have witnessed such vicissitudes as the French and English armies within the short period of eleven months. The two armies had more than once advanced and retired in the face of each other. Many of those we saw marching across the plain with the sanguine hope of intercepting our retreat, had been driven from Portugal and carried to France, had witnessed our embarkation from Corunna, and had since been expelled from the Tras os Montes, and now again were compelling us, by an immense superiority of numbers, again to retrograde.

After leaving the Spaniards at Arzobispo, the two armies were totally disunited, and little or no subsequent communication took place between them. We had seen enough of both officers and men to despise and distrust them, from their chief to the drummer, and to hope that we might never again be in the same camp. They not

only were incapable of acting as a military auxiliary, but were wholly remiss in fulfilling their promises, and instead of attempting to find us in provisions, while plenty reigned in their camp, even our officers were destitute of bread. While our troops were on one occasion four days without this indispensable necessary, they had the shameless impudence to sell loaves to our starving soldiers at an immoderate price. So pressing were our wants, that one of our commissaries took from them by force one hundred bullocks and one hundred mule loads of bread. But if their conduct before us had been despicable, it no less at a distance deserved reprehension. Vanegas, who was to have made a powerful diversion from La Mancha on Toledo, completely failed, even to the extent of alarming the enemy, who felt satisfied that 2,000 men in that city were sufficient to keep in check his whole force, while the passes along the Portuguese and Spanish frontier were gained almost without a struggle.

But disasters quickly followed the Spaniards after our separation. On the 6th they crossed to the left bank of the Tagus, and on the following day Cuesta retired with his main force, leaving two divisions of infantry, and the cavalry with the artillery in battery to defend the bridge. The enemy showed themselves on the 6th on the

opposite bank, and increased in number on the 7th, but the interposition of the river between them made the Spaniards consider themselves in perfect safety. On the 8th, the French brought up the artillery, and opened a fire on some redoubts constructed by the Spaniards, while they made preparations for crossing the river. The Spanish cavalry, devoid of all caution, were out in watering order, when 2,000 cavalry dashed into the river, above the bridge, at a good ford, and attacked the redoubts in the rear, at once enveloping the Spanish camp in confusion, dismay, and rout. They fled, some in the direction of Messa de Ibor, others to the southward, leaving their baggage and guns in the hands of the enemy. Those who fled on the former road abandoned guns and ammunition-waggons several leagues beyond the point of pursuit; and Colonel Waters, sent from our headquarters with a flag of truce, finding them thus safe, persuaded the Spaniards, with difficulty, to return and bring back their deserted guns.

This disgraceful affair was the climax of disasters to this army. It could not assemble in a few days subsequently 18,000 men, and the Duke of Albuquerque (against whose advice the Spanish cavalry had been left unprepared), quitted it in disgust, sending in charges to the Cortes against

his commander. This was anticipated by Cuesta; who, on the plea of his health, resigned on the 13th the command of the army. To complete the sad picture presented by the Spaniards; Vanegas, without answering any purpose, just so committed himself on the Toledo side, that Sebastiani fell upon him at Almonacaio on the 10th, and routed him with considerable loss.

Want of forage and provisions continued to an alarming degree in the mountainous tract around Deleytosa and Almarez, and, still keeping the advance at the latter place, rendered necessary the armies' moving more to the westward. Headquarters were on the 11th at Jarecejo, in order to be nearer Truxillo, where a large depôt was forming. Sir Arthur ordered, with justice, that the stoppage for the troops usually of six-pence a-day for their provisions, should be only three-pence from the 27th of July till further orders, in reference to their want of regular supplies.* While the head-quarters were at this place, the effects of want of food began to show themselves on the troops, by sickness breaking out, though

* It was not till the 12th of August that rations of spirits were delivered to the troops, and only on the 2nd September, that the regular delivery of provision, allowed the stoppage of sixpence per day.

not at first to the alarming extent it did a month after on the Guadiana.

But the road by Castel Branco to Lisbon was only covered by a small force of four British regiments, which had been moving up under General C. Craufurd, and it became necessary to place the army nearer to Portugal, in a position to cover both banks of the Tagus, should the enemy direct his march from Placentia. Although Craufurd was soon joined by Marshal Beresford from the north, the army moved on the 20th from Jarecejo to Truxillo, and gradually withdrew towards the frontier, head-quarters passing through Majadas, Medellin, Merida, to Badajoz, where Sir Arthur established himself on the 3rd of September with the troops cantoned as follows :—

First Division at	{ Badajos, Arroyo, Lobone, Almendralejo, Talavera la Real, and Santa Marta.
Second Division	{ Modtejo, La Mata, La Puebla de la Calsada, Gorra villa, and Torre Major.
Third Division	{ Campo Mayor. Villa de Rey.
Fourth Division	{ Olivenza. Badajos.

In the mean time the enemy had not followed the defeated Spaniards, but, fearful of leaving the north of Spain without troops, as early as they

had separated the two armies, and felt secure of the capital, the three corps set out on their return, on the 9th, towards Salamanca. Sir R. Wilson, whose advance to Escalona had not produced the supposed effect on the French army, or at Madrid, in retiring from his exposed situation, took post in the pass of Baños. This was the direct road for the enemies returning columns, who, after a sharp affair on the 12th, forced the position, and continued their route, leaving Sir Robert to fall back on the frontier of Portugal.

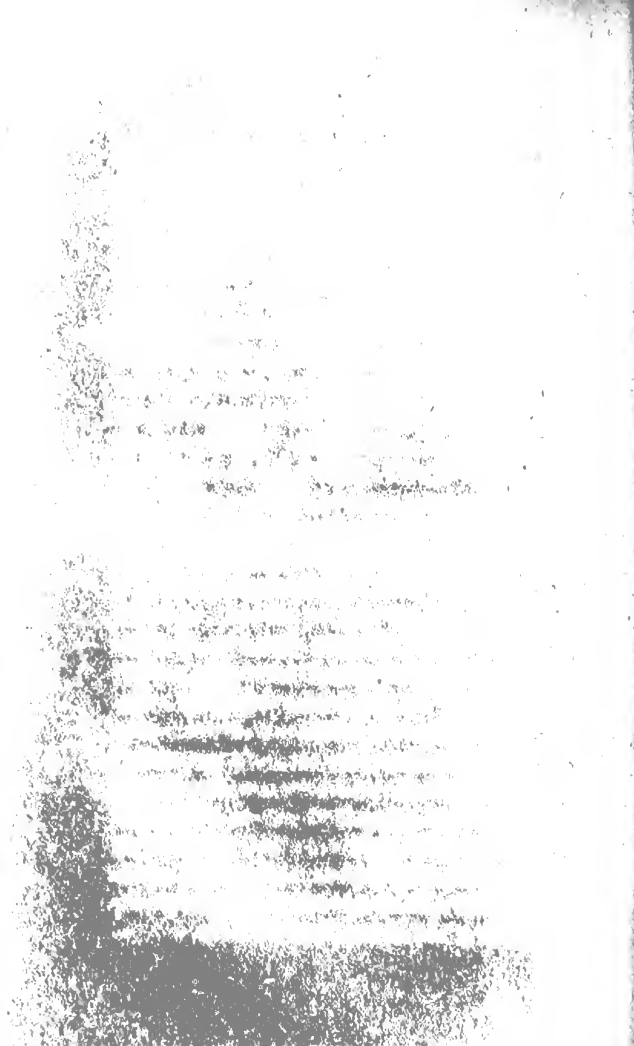
Thus ended the campaign of 1809, which was not less brilliant than interesting, and tended greatly to the ultimate deliverance of Spain and Europe. Though no immediate results were produced from it, there can be no doubt it saved Andalusia for a time, which province would never have fallen into the enemy's power, had not the besotted Spaniards sought opportunities for defeat, and committed themselves, as at Ocana. In drawing the three corps from the north, it showed all that part of Spain that the struggle was continued with firmness in other quarters; and the very fact of relieving the country from the pressure of the enemy, allowed breathing time, and proved their stay might not be permanent.

The battle of the 27th and 28th July broke

much the enemy's confidence when opposed to us ; and their repulse not only gave spirits to the Spaniards, but opened the eyes of Europe to the possibility of defeating the French ; for it may be fearlessly advanced, that the *morale* of the European armies was restored by this and our succeeding campaigns in Spain.

NARRATIVE
OF THE
CAMPAIGN IN HOLLAND
IN 1814,
WITH DETAILS OF THE
ATTACK ON BERGEN-OP-ZOOM:
BY LIEUT. J. W. DUNBAR MOODIE, H. P.
21ST FUSILEERS.

(ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED SERVICE JOURNAL.)



NARRATIVE
OF THE
CAMPAIGN IN HOLLAND IN 1814.

THERE are certain events in the life of every man on which the memory dwells with peculiar pleasure ; and the impressions they leave, from being interwoven with his earliest and most agreeable associations, are not easily effaced from his mind. Sixteen years have now elapsed since the short campaign in Holland, and the ill-fated attack on Bergen-op-Zoom ; but almost every circumstance that passed under my notice at that period, still remains as vividly pictured in my mind as if it had occurred but yesterday.

Our regiment, the 21st, or Royal North British Fusileers, was stationed at Fort-George when the order came for our embarkation for Holland. Whoever has experienced the dull monotony of garrison duty, may easily conceive the joy with which the intelligence was hailed. The eve of our embarkation was spent in all the hilarity inspired by the occasion, and, as may be supposed, the bottle circulated with more than ordinary rapidity. Our convoy, Captain Nixon, R.N. in return for some kindness he had met with from my family, while on the Orkney station; insisted on my taking my passage to Helvoet Sluys, along with our commanding officer and acting-adjutant, on board his own vessel, the *Nightingale*. The scene that was exhibited next day, as we were embarking, must be familiar to most military men. The beach presented a spectacle I shall never forget. While the boats, crowded with soldiers, with their arms glittering in the sun, were pushing off, women were to be seen up to their middles in the water, bidding, perhaps, a last farewell to their husbands; while others were sitting disconsolate on the rocks, stupified with grief, and almost insensible of what was going forward. Many of the poor creatures were pouring out blessings on the officers, and begging us to be kind to their husbands. At

last, when we had got the soldiers fairly seated in their places, which was no easy task, we pulled off, while the shouts of our men were echoed back in wailings and lamentations, mixed with benedictions, from the unhappy women left behind us. As for the officers, most of us being young fellows, and single, we had little to damp our joy at going on foreign service. For my own part, I confess I felt some tender regrets in parting with a fair damsel in the neighbourhood, with whom I was not a little smitten ; but I was not of an age to take these matters long to heart, being scarcely sixteen at the time. Poor A—— R—— has since been consigned, by a calculating mother, to an old officer, who had nearly lost his sight, but accumulated a few thousand pounds in the West Indies.

We soon got under way, with a fair wind, for Holland. Instead of being crammed into a transport, with every circumstance which could render a sea-voyage disagreeable, we felt ourselves lucky in being in most comfortable quarters, with a most excellent gentlemanly fellow for our entertainer in Captain Nixon. To add to our comforts, we had the regimental band with us, who were generally playing through the day, when the weather or sea-sickness would allow them. On arriving off Goeree, we were over-

taken by one of the most tremendous gales I have ever experienced, and I have had some experience of the element since. We had come to anchor, expecting a pilot from the shore, between two sandbanks, one on each side of us, while another extended between us and the land. The gale commenced towards night, blowing right on shore. Our awful situation may well be conceived when the wind increased almost to a hurricane, with no hope of procuring a pilot. The sea, which had begun to rise before the commencement of the gale, was now running mountains high, and we could see the white foam, and hear the tremendous roar of the breakers on the sandbank astern of us. Of the two transports which accompanied us with the troops on board, one had anchored outside of us, and the other had been so fortunate as to get out to sea before the gale had reached its greatest violence. We had two anchors a-head, but the sea was so high, that we had but little expectation of holding-on during the night. About midnight, the transport which had come to anchor to windward, drifted past us, having carried away her cables.

The sea every now and then broke over us from stem to stern, and we continued through a great part of the night to fire signals of distress. It is curious to observe on these occasions the

different effects of danger on the minds of men: the nervous, alarmed too soon, and preparing themselves for the worst that may happen; the stupid and insensible, without forethought of danger, until they are in the very jaws of destruction, when they are taken quite unprepared, and resign themselves up to despair; and the thoughtless, whose levity inclines them to catch the external expression of the confidence or fear in the countenances of those around them. About one o'clock in the morning, the captain got into bed, and we followed his example, but had hardly lain down, when the alarm was given that one of the cables was gone. We immediately ran on deck, but it was soon discovered that the wind had shifted a few points, and that the cable had only slackened a little. As the day dawned, the wind gradually abated, and at length fell off to a dead calm. A light haze hid the low land from our view, and hung over the sea, which still rolled in huge billows, as if to conceal the horrors of our situation during the preceding night. In an hour or two, the fog cleared away sufficiently to enable us to see a few miles in all directions. Every eye was strained in search of the two transports, with our regiment on board, but seeing nothing, we all gave them up for lost; for we could hardly conceive the possibility of the

transport, which drifted past us in the night, escaping shipwreck on this low and dangerous coast, or of the other being able to get out to sea. By the help of our sweeps and a light breeze, we were getting more in with the land, when at last we observed a pilot-boat coming out to us. Our little Dutch pilot, when he got alongside of us, soon relieved our minds from anxiety as to the fate of one of the transports, which had fortunately escaped the sandbanks, and was safe in Helvoet Sluys.

A Dutchman being an animal quite new to many of us, we were not a little diverted with his dress and demeanour. Diederick was a little, thick-set, round-built fellow, about five feet three inches in height, bearing a considerable resemblance in shape to his boat: he was so cased up in clothes, that no particular form was to be traced about him, excepting an extraordinary roundness and projection "*a posteriori*," which he owed as much, I believe, to nature as to his habiliments. He wore a tight, coarse, blue jerkin, or pea-jacket, on his body, and reaching half-way down his legs, gathered up in folds tight round his waist, and bunching out amply below. His jacket had no collar, hut he had a handkerchief tied round his neck like a rope, which, with his protruding glassy eyes, gave him the appearance

of strangulation. On his legs he wore so many pairs of breeches and trowsers, that I verily believe we might have pulled off three or four pairs without being a whit the wiser as to his natural conformation. On his feet he wore a pair of shoes with huge buckles, and his head was crowned with a high-topped red nightcap. Thus equipped, with the addition of a short pipe stuck in his mouth, "*ecce*" Diederick, our worthy pilot, who stumping manfully up to the Captain, with his hand thrust out like a bowsprit, and a familiar nod of his head, wished him "*goeden dag*," and welcomed him cordially to Holland. I observed that our Captain seemed a little "taken aback" with the pilot's republican manners; however, he did not refuse honest Diederick a shake of his hand, for the latter had evidently no conception of a difference in rank requiring any difference in the mode of salutation. After paying his respects to the captain, he proceeded to shake us all by the hand in turn, with many expressions of goodwill to the English, whom he was pleased to say had *always* been the Dutchmen's best friends. Having completed the ceremonial of our reception, he returned to the binnacle, and, hearing the leadsman sing out "by the mark three," clapping his fat fists to his sides, and looking up to see if the sails were "clean

full," exclaimed with great energy, "Bout Skipp!" The captain was anxious to procure some information regarding the channels between the sandbanks, and depth of the water, but all the satisfaction our friend Diederick would vouchsafe him was, "*Ja, Mynheer, wanneer wij niet beter kan maaken dan moeten wij naar de anker komen**." We soon reached Helvoet Sluys, and came to anchor for the night.

On landing next day, we found the half of the regiment which had so fortunately escaped shipwreck, with the transport which had drifted past us in the night of the gale. Here we took leave of our kind friends the captain and officers of the Nightingale, and next day marched to Buitensluys, a little town nearly opposite to Willemstadt. Here we were detained for several days, it not being possible to cross the intervening branch of the sea, in consequence of the quantities of ice which were floating down from the rivers. We soon got ourselves billeted out in the town and neighbouring country, and established a temporary mess at the principal inn of the place, where we began to practise the Dutch accomplishments of drinking gin and

* "When we can't do better we must come to anchor,"—a common Dutch saying.

smoking, for which we had a convenient excuse in the humidity and coldness of the climate. Our hard drinkers, of course, did not fail to inculcate the doctrine, that wine and spirits were the "sovereignest remedy" in the world for the ague, of which disease they seemed to live in constant dread, particularly after dinner. During our sojourn at Buitensluys, our great amusement through the day was skating on the ice with the country girls, who were nothing shy, and played all manners of tricks with us, by upsetting us, &c. &c. thus affording rather a dangerous precedent, which was sometimes returned on themselves with interest.

We are accustomed to hear of the Dutch phlegm, which certainly forms a distinguishing feature in their "physical character;" they are dull and slow in being excited to the strong emotions, but it is a great mistake to suppose that this constitutional sluggishness implies any deficiency in the milder moral virtues. The Dutch, I generally found to possess, in a high degree, the kindly, charitable feelings of human nature, which show themselves to the greater advantage, from the native simplicity of their manners. I had got a comfortable billet at a miller's house, a little out of the village. The good folks finding that I was a Scotchman, for which people they

have a particular liking from some similarity in their manners, began to treat me with great cordiality, and threw off that reserve, which is so natural with people who have soldiers forced into their houses whether they will or not. The miller and his cheerful "frow" never tired of showing me every kindness in their power while I remained with them, and to such a degree did they carry this, that it quite distressed me. On leaving Buitensluys, neither my landlord nor his wife would accept of any remuneration, though I urgently pressed it on them. When the avarice of the Dutch character is taken into account, they certainly deserve no small praise for this disinterested kind-heartedness.

The ice having broken up a little, we were enabled to get ferried over to Willemstadt, and proceed on our march to Tholen, where we arrived in two or three days. The cold in Holland this winter was excessive, and Tholen being within four miles of Bergen-op-Zoom, a great part of the inhabitants, as well as garrison, were every day employed in breaking the ice in the ditches of the fortifications. The frost, however, was so intense, that before the circuit was completed, which was towards evening, we were often skaiting on the places which had been broken in the morning; we could not, with all

our exertions, break more than nine feet in width, which was but an ineffectual protection against the enemy, had they felt any inclination to attack us in this half-dilapidated fortress, with our small garrison.

After we had been here some days, the remainder of our regiment, who had been saved by the transport getting out to sea, joined us. They had sprung a leak, and were near perishing, when it was fortunately stopped, and the gale abated. The first thing we all thought of on coming to Tholen was procuring snug billets, as we might remain some time in garrison. With this view, I employed a German corporal, who acted as our interpreter. He volunteered from the Veteran Battalion at Fort George to accompany us. After looking about for some time, he found out a quarter which he guessed would suit my taste. The house was inhabited by a respectable burgher, who had been at sea, and still retained the title of Skipper. His son, as I afterwards learned, had died a few months before, leaving a very pretty young widow, who still resided with her father-in-law. I had not seen her long before I became interested in her. Johanna M—— was innocence and simplicity itself; tender, soft, and affectionate; her eyes did not possess that brightness which bespeaks

lively passions, and too often inconstancy; but they were soft, dark, and liquid, beaming with affection and goodness of heart. On coming home one day, I found her with her head resting on her hands and in tears; her father and mother-in-law, with their glistening eyes resting on her, with an expression of sympathy and sorrow, apparently more for her loss than their own; as if they would have said, "Poor girl! we have lost a son, but you have lost a husband." Johanna, however, was young, and her spirits naturally buoyant: of course it cannot be supposed that this intensity of feeling could exist but at intervals. As usual, I soon made myself quite at home with the Skipper and his family, and became, moreover, a considerable favourite, from the interest I took in Johanna, and a talent at making punch, which was always put in requisition when they had a visit from the "*Predikant*," or priest of the parish; on these occasions I was always one of the party at supper, which is their principal meal. It usually consisted of a large tureen, with bits of meat floating in fat or butter, for which we had to dive with our forks; we had also forcemeat-balls and sour-cROUT. The priest who was the very picture of good-nature and good-living, wore a three-cornered cocked-hat, which, according to the fashion of

the middle classes, never quitted his head, excepting when he said grace. When supper was over and the punch made, which always drew forth the most unqualified praises of the "*Predikaant*," he would lug out a heap of papers from his breeches-pocket, inscribed with favourite Dutch ditties, which, so far as I could understand the language, contained political allusions to the state of matters in Europe at the time. The burden of one of the songs I still remember, from the constant recurrence of the words, "*Well mag het Ue bekoomen*," at the end of each stanza. The jolly priest being no singer, always read these overflowings of the Dutch muse with the most energetic gestures and accent. At the end of each verse, which seemed by its rhyme to have something of the titillating effect of a feather on the sober features of the "Skipper," the reader would break out into a Stentorian laugh, enough to have shaken down the walls of Jericho, or the Stadt-huis itself. The good "*vrouw*," whose attention was almost entirely occupied with her household concerns, and who had still more prose in her composition than her mate, would now and then, like a good wife, exhibit some feeble tokens of pleasure, when she observed his features to relax in a more than ordinary degree.

Soon after I had taken up my abode in the house, I observed that Johanna had got a Dutch and English grammar, which she had begun to study with great assiduity, and as I was anxious to acquire Dutch, this naturally enough brought us often together. She would frequently come into my room to ask the pronunciation of some word, for she was particularly scrupulous on this head. On these occasions, I would make her sit down beside me, and endeavour to make her perfect in each word in succession; but she found so much difficulty in bringing her pretty lips into the proper form, that I was under the necessity of enforcing my instructions, by punishing her with a kiss for every failure. But so far was this from quickening her apprehension, that the difficulties seemed to increase at every step. Poor Johanna, notwithstanding this little innocent occupation, could not, however, be entirely weaned from her affection for the memory of her departed husband, for her grief would often break out in torrents of tears; when this was the case, we had no lesson for that day.

Garrison duty is always dull and irksome, and soldiers are always glad of any thing to break the monotony of a life where there is no activity or excitement. One day, while we lay at Tholen, a letter was brought from head-quarters, which

was to be forwarded from town to town to Admiral Young, who was lying in the Scheldt at the time. A couple of horses and a guide were procured, and I was sent with the letter, much to my own satisfaction, as I was glad of an opportunity to see more of the country. I was ordered to proceed to a certain town, the name of which I forget, where another officer should relieve me. It was late when I got to the town, and not being aware that it was occupied by a Russian regiment, I was not a little surprised in being challenged by a sentry in a foreign language. I could not make out from the soldier what they were, until the officer of the guard came up, who understood a little English. He informed me that they were on their march to Tholen, where they were to do garrison duty. On desiring to be conducted to his commanding officer, he brought me to the principal house in the town, at the door of which two sentries were posted. The scene in the interior was singular enough. The first object that met my eyes on entering the Colonel's apartment, was a knot of soldiers in their green jackets and trowsers, lying in a heap, one above another, in the corner of the room, (with their bonnets pulled over their eyes,) like a litter of puppies, and snoring like bull-frogs. These were the Colonel's body-guard.

The room with its furniture exhibited a scene of the most outrageous debauchery. Chairs overturned, broken decanters and bottles, fragments of tumblers and wine-glasses lay scattered over the floor and table. Two or three candles were still burning on the table, and others had been broken in the conflict of bottles and other missiles. Taking a rapid glance at the state of matters in passing, we approached the Colonel's bed, which stood in one corner of the room. My conductor drew the curtains, when I saw two people lying in their flannel-shirts; the elder was a huge, broad-faced man, with a ferocious expression of countenance, who I was informed was the Colonel; the other was a young man about seventeen years of age, exceedingly handsome, and with so delicate a complexion, that I actually thought at the time he must be the Colonel's wife. With this impression I drew back for a moment, when he spoke to me in good English, and told me he was the Adjutant, and begged I would state what I had to communicate to the Colonel, which he would interpret to him, as the latter did not understand English. The Colonel said he should forward the letter by one of his officers, and as I could then return to Tholen, we should proceed to that place next morning. We proceeded accordingly next morn-

ing on our march to Tholen. The Colonel had sent on his light company as an advanced-guard, some time before us, with orders to halt at a village on the road, until the regiment came up. Whether they had mistaken his orders I know not, but on coming to the village, no light company was to be found; and on inquiry, we learned that they had marched on. The rage of the Colonel knew no bounds, and produced a most ridiculous and childish scene betwixt himself and the officers. With the tears running down his cheeks, and stamping with rage, he went among them; first accusing one, and then the other, as if they were to blame for the mistake of the advanced-guard. Each of them, however, answered him in a petulant snappish manner, like enraged pug-dogs, at the same time clapping their hands to their swords, and some of them drawing them half out of the scabbards, when he would turn away from them, weeping bitterly like a great blubbering boy all the while. The officers, however, began to pity the poor Colonel, and at last succeeded in appeasing his wrath and drying his tears. He proceeded forthwith to order an enormous breakfast to be prepared for us immediately. It was of no use for the innkeeper to say that he had not any of the articles they desired, he was compelled by threats

and curses to procure them, come whence they would. As our landlord knew well whom he had to deal with, our table soon groaned under a load of dishes, enough apparently to have dined four times our number. In a trice we had every thing that could be procured for love or money, and it was wonderful to observe with what alacrity the landlord waited on us, and obeyed the orders he received. He appeared, in fact, to have thrown off his native sluggishness, and two or three pairs of breeches for the occasion. Before proceeding on the march, I wished to pay my share of the entertainment, but my proposal was treated with perfect ridicule. At first, I imagined that the Russians considered me as their guest, but I could not discover that the innkeeper received any remuneration for the entertainment prepared for us. The Russians had many odd customs during their meals, such as drinking out of each other's glasses, and eating from each other's plates; a compliment, which in England, we could willingly dispense with. They seemed to have a great liking to the English, and every day our men and theirs were seen walking arm-in-arm about the streets together. The gin, which was rather too cheap in this country, seemed to be a great bond of union between them; and strange to say, I do

not recollect a single instance of their quarrelling. Notwithstanding the snapping between the commanding officer and the other officers, they seemed on the whole to be in excellent discipline in other respects. The manner in which they went through their exercise was admirable, particularly when we consider that they were only sailors acting on shore. There was one custom, however, which never failed to excite our disgust and indignation; hardly a day passed but we saw some of their officers boxing the ears of their men in the ranks, who seemed to bear this treatment with the greatest patience, and without turning their eyes to the right or left during the operation; but such is the effect of early habits and custom, that the very men who bore this degrading treatment, seemed to feel the same disgust for our military punishment of flogging; which, however degrading in its effects on the character of the sufferer, could not at least be inflicted at the caprice of the individual. We may here observe the different effects produced on the character of men by a free and a despotic system of Government: it was evidently not the *nature*, but the *degree*, of punishment in our service which shocked the Russian prejudices.

We had all become thoroughly sick of the monotony and sameness of our duties and occupa-

tions at Tholen, when we received orders to march the next day, (8th March, 1814). As the attack on Bergen-op-Zoom, which took place on that evening, was of course kept a profound secret, the common opinion was, that we were destined for Antwerp, where the other division of the army had already had some fighting. Though elated, in common with my brother officers, with the prospect of coming to closer quarters with the enemy, it was not without tears on both sides that I parted with poor Johanna, who had somehow taken a hold of my affections that I was hardly aware of till this moment. The time left us to prepare for our march I devoted to her, and she did not even seek the pretext of her English grammar to remain in my room for the few hours we could yet enjoy together. We had marched some miles before I could think of any thing but her, for the recollection of her tears still thrilled to my very heart, and occasioned a stifling sensation that almost deprived me of utterance. But we were soon thrown into a situation where the excitement was too powerful and engrossing to leave room for other thoughts than of what we were immediately engaged in.

It was nearly dark when we arrived at the village of Halteren, which is only three or four miles from Bergen-op-Zoom, where we took up

our quarters for the night. On the distribution of the billets to the officers for the night, I received one upon a farm-house about a mile in the country. I had not been long at my new lodging, when I was joined by four or five officers of the 4th Battalion Royal Scots, who had just arrived by long marches from Stralsund, and were billeted about the country. They had heard that an attempt to surprise Bergen-op-Zoom would be made that same night. It is not easy to describe the sensations occasioned in my mind by this intelligence; it certainly partook but little of fear, but the novelty (to me at least) of the situation in which we were about to be placed, excited a feeling of anxiety as to the result of an attempt, in which, from the known strength of the place, we dared hardly expect to be successful. There is also a degree of melancholy which takes hold of the mind at these moments of serious reflection which precede the conflict. My comrades evidently shared this feeling with me. One of them remarked, as we were preparing to march, "My boys, we'll see something like service to-night," and added, "we'll not all meet again in this world." Poor Mac Nicol, who made the remark, fell that night, which was the first and the last of my acquaintance with him. I believe every one of us were wounded. Learning

from my new acquaintances that the grenadier company of their regiment, (Royal Scots), which was commanded by an old friend of mine, (Lieutenant Allan Robertson,) and whom I had not seen for some years, was only about a mile farther off, I thought I should have time to see him and join my regiment before they marched, should they be sent to the attack. However, the party of the Royals whom I accompanied lost their way, from their ignorance of the road, and we in consequence made a long circuit, during which I heard from an aid-de-camp who passed us, that the 21st were on their march to attack the place on another quarter from us. In these circumstances I was exceedingly puzzled what course to take; if I went in search of my regiment, I had every chance of missing them in the night, being quite ignorant of the roads. Knowing that the Royals would be likely to head one of the columns from the number of the regiment, I took what I thought the surest plan, by attaching myself to the grenadier company under my gallant friend. There is something awfully impressive in the mustering of soldiers before going into action; many of those names, which the serjeants were now calling in an under tone of voice, would never be repeated, but in the tales of their comrades who saw them fall.

After mustering the men, we proceeded to the general "rendez-vous" of the regiments forming the column; the Royals led the column followed by the other regiments according to their number. As every thing depended on our taking the enemy by surprise, the strictest orders were given to observe a profound silence on the march.

While we are proceeding to the attack, it will not be amiss to give the reader a slight sketch of the situation of Bergen-op-Zoom, and the plan of the operations of the different columns, to render my relation of the proceedings of the column I served with the more intelligible.

Bergen-op-Zoom is situated on the right bank of the Scheldt, and takes its name from the little river Zoom, which, after supplying the defences with water, discharges itself into the Scheldt. The old channel of the Zoom, into which the tide flows towards the centre of the town, forms the harbour, which is nearly dry at low-water. The mouth of the harbour was the point fixed upon for the attack of the right column, under Major-General Skerret, and Brig.-Gen. Gore. This column consisted of 1100 men of the 1st regiment, or Royal Scots, the 37th, 44th, and 91st, (as far as I can recollect). Lieut.-Col. Henry, with 650 men of the 21st, or Royal Scot's Fusileers, was sent on a false attack near

the Steenberg-gate, to the left of the harbour, (I suppose the reader to be standing at the entrance of the harbour facing the town). Another column, consisting of 1200 men of the 33d, 55th, and 69th regiments, under Lieut.-Col. Morrice, were to attack the place near the Bredagate, and endeavour to enter by escalade. A third column, under Col. Lord Proby, consisting of 1000 men of the 1st and Coldstream Guards, was to make nearly a complete circuit of the place, and enter the enemy's works by crossing the ice, some distance to the right of the entrance of the harbour and the Waterport-gate. This slight account of the plan of attack I have borrowed in some degree from Col. Jones' Narrative, who must have procured his information on these points from the best sources. However, as I only pretend to speak with certainty of what fell under my own immediate observation, I shall return to the right column, with which I served on this occasion.

When we had proceeded some way we fell in with a picket, commanded by Capt. Darrah, of the 21st. Fusileers, who was mustering his men to proceed to the attack. Thinking that our regiment (the 21st), must pass his post on their way to the false attack, he told me to remain with him until they came up. I, in consequence,

waited some time, but hearing nothing of the regiment, and losing patience, I gave him the slip in the dark, and ran on until I regained my place with the grenadier company of the Royals. On approaching the place of attack, we crossed the Tholen-dike, and immediately entered the bed of the Zoom, through which we had to push our way before we entered the wet ditch. It is not easy to convey an idea of the toil we experienced in getting through the deep mud of the river; we immediately sank nearly to our middles, and when, with great difficulty, we succeeded in freeing one leg from the mire, we sank nearly to the shoulder on the other side before we could get one pace forward. As might be expected, we got into some confusion in labouring through this horrible slough, which was like bird-lime about our legs; regiments got intermixed in the darkness, while some stuck fast, and some unlucky wretches got trodden down and smothered in the mud. Notwithstanding this obstruction, a considerable portion of the column had got through, when those behind us, discouraged by this unexpected difficulty, raised a shout to encourage themselves. Gen. Skerret, who was at the head of the column, was furious with rage, but the mischief was already done. The sluices were opened, and a torrent of water poured down on us through the

channel of the river, by which the progress of those behind was effectually stopped for some time. Immediately after the sluices were opened, a brilliant firework was displayed on the ramparts, which showed every object as clearly as daylight. Several cannon and some musketry opened on us, but did us little harm, as they seemed to be discharged at random. At the moment the water came down, I had just cleared the deepest part of the channel, and making a great effort, I gained a flat piece of ice which was sticking edgeways in the mud; to this I clung till the strength of the torrent had passed, after which I soon gained the firm land, and pushed on with the others to the ditch. The point at which we entered was a bastion to the right of the harbour, from one of the angles of which a row of high palisades was carried through the ditch. To enable us to pass the water, some scaling-ladders had been sunk to support us in proceeding along the palisade, over which we had first to climb with each other's assistance, our soldiers performing the office of ladders to those who preceded them. So great were the obstacles we met with, that had not the attention of the enemy fortunately (or rather most judiciously), been distracted by the false attack under Col. Henry, it appeared quite impossible for

us to have affected an entrance at this point. While we were proceeding forward in this manner, Col. Muller* of the Royals was clambering along the tops of the palisade, calling to those who had got the start of him, to endeavour to open the Waterport-gate, and let down the drawbridge to our right; but no one in the hurry of the moment seemed to hear him. On getting near enough, I told him I should effect it if it was possible.

We met with but trifling resistance on gaining the rampart; the enemy being panic struck, fled to the streets and houses in the town, from which they kept up a pretty sharp fire on us for some time. I got about twenty soldiers of different regiments to follow me to the Waterport-gate, which we found closed. It was constructed of thin paling, with an iron bar across it about three inches in breadth. Being without tools of any kind, we made several ineffectual attempts to open it. At last, retiring a few paces, we made a rush at it in a body, when the iron bar snapped in the middle like a bit of glass. Some of my people got killed and wounded during this part of the work, but when we got to the drawbridge, we were a little more sheltered from the firing. The bridge was up, and secured by a lock in the

* Now of the Ceylon regiment.

right hand post of the two which supported it. I was simple enough to attempt to pick the lock with a soldier's bayonet, but after breaking two or three, we at last had an axe brought us from the bastion where the troops were entering. With the assistance of this instrument we soon succeeded in cutting the lock out of the post, and taking hold of the chain, I had the satisfaction to pull down the drawbridge with my own hands.

While I was engaged in this business, Col. Muller was forming the Royals on the rampart where we entered ; but a party of about 150 men of different regiments, under General Skerret, who must have entered to the left of the harbour, were clearing the ramparts towards the Steinbergen-gate, where the false attack had been made under Col. Henry ; and a party, also, under Col. Carleton, of the 44th regiment, was proceeding in the opposite direction along the ramparts to the right, without meeting with much resistance. Hearing the firing on the opposite side of the town from Gen. Skerret's party, and supposing that they had marched through the town, I ran on through the streets to overtake them, accompanied by only one or two soldiers, for the rest had left me and returned to the bastion after we had opened the gate. In proceeding along the canal or harbour, which divided this part of the town, I came to a

loop-holed wall, which was continued from the houses down to the water's edge. I observed a party of soldiers within a gate in this wall, and was going up to them, taking them for our own people, when I was challenged in French, and had two or three shots fired at me. Seeing no other way of crossing the harbour but by a little bridge, which was nearly in a line with the wall, I returned to the Waterport-gate, which I found Col. Muller had taken possession of with two or three companies of his regiment. I went up to him, and told him that I had opened the gate according to his desire, and of the interruption I had met with in the town. Not knowing me, he asked my name, which he said he would remember, and sent one of the companies up with me to the wall, already mentioned, and ordered the officer who commanded the company, after he should have driven the enemy away, to keep possession of it until farther orders. On coming to the gate, we met with a sharp resistance, but after firing a few rounds, and preparing to charge they gave way, leaving us in possession of the gate and bridge.

Leaving the company here, and crossing the little bridge, I again set forward alone to overtake Gen. Skerret's party, guided by the firing on the ramparts. Avoiding any little parties of the

enemy, I had reached the inside of the ramparts where the firing was, without its occurring to me that I might get into the wrong box and be taken prisoner. Fortunately I observed a woman looking over a shop door, on one side of the street; the poor creature, who must have been under the influence of some strong passion to remain in her present exposed situation, was pale and trembling. She was a Frenchwoman, young, and not bad-looking. I asked her where the British soldiers were, which she told me without hesitation, pointing at the same time in the direction. I shook hands with her, and bade her good night, not entertaining the smallest suspicion of her deceiving me; following her directions, I clambered up the inside of the rampart, and rejoined Gen. Skerret's party.

The moon had now risen, and though the sky was cloudy, we could see pretty well what was doing. I found my friend Robertson here, with the grenadier company of the Royals; I learned from him that the party, which was now commanded by Capt. Guthrie of the 33d regiment, had been compelled by numbers to retire from the bastion which the enemy now occupied, and should endeavour to maintain the one which they now possessed, until they could procure a reinforcement. He also told me of Gen. Skerret's being danger-

rously wounded and taken prisoner, an irreparable loss to our party, as Capt. Guthrie was ignorant of the General's intentions. In the mean time the enemy continued a sharp firing on us, which we returned as fast as our men could load their firelocks. Several of the enemy who had fallen, as well as of our own men, were lying on the ramparts; one of our officers, who had been wounded in the arm, was walking about, saying occasionally, in rather a discontented manner, "This is what is called honour;" though I could readily sympathise with him in the pain he suffered, I could not exactly understand how, if there is any honour in getting wounded, any bodily suffering can detract from it.

We found a large pile of logs of wood on the rampart; these we immediately disposed across the gorge of the bastion, so as to form a kind of parapet, over which our people could fire, leaving, however, about half the distance open towards the parapet of the rampart. On the opposite side of the bastion were two twenty-four-pounders of the enemy's, which being raised on high platforms, we turned upon them, firing along the ramparts over the heads of our own party. However valuable this resource might be to us, we were still far from being on equal terms with the French, who besides greatly exceeding us in num-

bers, had also brought up two or three field-pieces, which annoyed us much during the night. There was also a windmill on the bastion they occupied, from the top of which their musketry did great execution among us. In the course of the night, they made several ineffectual attempts to drive us from our position : on these occasions, which we always were aware of from the shouts they raised to encourage each other, as soon as they made their appearance on the rampart, we gave them a good dose of grape from our twenty-four-pounders, and had a party ready to charge them back. I observed our soldiers were always disposed to meet the enemy half-way, and the latter were soon so well aware of our humour, that they invariably turned tail before we could get within forty or fifty paces of them. The firing was kept up almost continually on both sides until about two o'clock in the morning, when it would sometimes cease for more than half-an-hour together. During one of these intervals of stillness, exhausted with our exertions, and the cold we felt in our drenched clothes, some of the officers and I lay down along the parapet together, in hopes of borrowing a little heat from each other. I fell insensibly into a troubled dozing state, in which my imagination still revelled in the scenes of night. While I yet lay the

firing had recommenced, which, with the shouts of the enemy, and the words of those about me, seemed to form but the ground work of my fitful dream, which continued to link imaginary circumstances to reality. How long I might have lain in this stupor, between sleeping and waking, I know not, when suddenly I felt the ground shake under me, and heard at the same time a crash as if the whole town had been overwhelmed by an earthquake; a bright glare of light burst on my eyes at the same instant and almost blinded me. A shot from the enemy had blown up our small magazine on the ramparts, on which we depended for the supply of the two twenty-four-pounders which had been of such material use to us during the night. This broke our slumbers most effectually; and we had now nothing for it but to maintain our ground in the best way we were able until we could receive a reinforcement from some of the other parties. Immediately after this disaster, raising a tremendous shout or rather yell, the enemy again attempted to come to close quarters with us, in hopes of our being utterly disheartened; but our charging party, which we had always in readiness, made them wheel round as usual. In the course of the night, we had sent several small parties of men to represent the state of our detachment, and endeavour to procure as-

sistance, but none of them returned, having, we supposed, been intercepted by the enemy. Discouraged as we were by this circumstance, we still continued to hold our ground until break of day.

By this time the firing had entirely ceased in the other part of the town, naturally leading us, in the absence of all communication, to conclude that the other parties had been driven from the place. However this may have been, the first dawn of day showed us in but too plain colours the hopelessness of our situation. The enemy now brought an overwhelming force against us; but still we expected, from the narrowness of the rampart, that they would not be able to derive the full advantage of their superiority; but in this we were deceived. The bastion we occupied was extensive, but only that portion of it near the gorge was furnished with a parapet. At this spot, and behind the logs which we had thrown up, our now diminished force was collected. Keeping up an incessant fire to divert our attention, the French (who now outnumbered us, at least three to one,) detached a part of their force, which skirting the outside of the ramparts, and ascending the face of the bastion we occupied, suddenly opened a most destructive fire on our flank and rear. From this latter party we were

totally unprotected, while they were sheltered by the top of the rampart: we were thus left to defend ourselves from both at once as we best could. But still they would not venture to charge us, and it would have been of little use for us to charge them, for the moment we quitted the parapet, we would have been exposed to a cross fire from the other bastion.

The slaughter was now dreadful, and our poor fellows, who had done all that soldiers could in our trying situation, now fell thick and fast. Just at this moment, my friend Robertson, under whose command I had put myself at the beginning of the attack, fell. I had just time to run up to him, and found him stunned from a wound in the head; when our gallant commander, seeing the inutility of continuing the unequal contest, gave the order to retreat. We had retired in good order about three hundred yards, when poor Guthrie received a wound in the head, which I have since been informed deprived him of his sight. The enemy, when they saw us retreating, hung upon our rear, keeping up a sharp fire all the time, but they still seemed to have some respect for us from the trouble we had already given them. We had indulged the hope, that by continuing our course along the ramparts, we should be able to effect our retreat by the Waterport-

gate,* not being aware that we should be intercepted by the mouth of the harbour. We were already at the very margin before we discovered our mistake and completely hemmed in by the French. We had therefore no alternative left to us but to surrender ourselves prisoners of war, or to attempt to effect our escape across the harbour, by means of the floating pieces of ice with which the water was covered. Not one of us seemed to entertain the idea of surrender, however, and in the despair which had now taken possession of every heart, we threw ourselves into the water, or leaped for the broken pieces of ice which were floating about. The scene that ensued was shocking beyond description—the canal or harbour was faced on both sides by high brick walls; in the middle of the channel lay a small Dutch-decked vessel, which was secured by a rope to the opposite side of the harbour. Our only hope of preserving our lives or effecting our escape, depended on our being able to gain this little vessel. Already, many had, by leaping first on one piece of ice and then on another, succeeded in getting on board the vessel, which they drew to the opposite side of the canal by the rope, and thus freed one obstruction: but immediately

* This was the only gate which was opened during the night.

afterwards, being intercepted by the Waterport redoubt, they were compelled to surrender. The soldiers in particular, when they found themselves inclosed by the enemy, seemed to lose the power of reflection, and leaped madly into the water, with their arms in their hands, without even waiting until a piece of ice should float within their reach. The air was rent with vain cries for help from the drowning soldiers, mixed with the exulting shouts of the enemy, who seemed determined to make us drain the bitter cup of defeat to the very dregs. Among the rest I had scrambled down the face of the canal to a beam running horizontally along the brick-work, from which other beams descended perpendicularly into the water, to prevent the sides from being injured by shipping. After sticking my sword into my belt, (for I had thrown the scabbard away the previous night,) I leaped from this beam, which was nine or ten feet above the water, for a piece of ice, but not judging my distance very well, it tilted up with me, and I sunk to the bottom of the water. However, I soon came up again, and after swimming to the other side of the canal and to the vessel, I found nothing to catch hold of. I had therefore nothing for it but to hold on by the piece of ice I had at first leaped on, and swinging my body under it, I managed to keep my face out of the water. I had just

caught hold of the ice in time, for encumbered as I was with a heavy great coat, now thoroughly soaked, I was in a fair way to share the fate of many a poor fellow now lying at the bottom of the water. I did not, however, retain my slippery hold undisturbed. I was several times dragged under water by the convulsive grasp of the drowning soldiers, but by desperate efforts I managed to free myself and regain my hold. Even at this moment, I cannot think without horror of the means which the instinct of self-preservation suggested to save my own life, while some poor fellow clung to my clothes: I think I still see his agonized look, and hear his imploring cry, as he sank for ever.

After a little time I remained undisturbed tenant of the piece of ice. I was not, however, the only survivor of those who had got into the water; several of them were still hanging on to other pieces of ice, but they one by one let go their hold, and sank as their strength failed. At length only three or four besides myself remained. All this time some of the enemy continued firing at us, and I saw one or two shot in the water near me. So intent was every one on effecting his escape, that though they sometimes cast a look of commiseration at their drowning comrades, no one thought for a moment of giving us any assistance. The very hope of it had at length so

completely faded in our minds, that we had ceased to ask the aid of those that passed us on the fragments of ice. But Providence had reserved one individual who possessed a heart to feel for the distress of his fellow- creatures more than for his own personal safety. The very last person that reached the vessel in the manner I have already described, was Lieut. M'Dougal, of the 91st Regiment. I had attracted his attention in passing me, and he had promised his assistance when he should reach the vessel. He soon threw me a rope, but I was now so weak, and benumbed with the intense cold, that it slipped through my fingers alongside of the vessel ; he then gave me another, doubled, which I got under my arms, and he thus succeeded, with the assistance of a wounded man, in getting me on board. I feel that it is quite out of my power to do justice to the humanity and contempt of danger displayed by our generous deliverer on this occasion. While I was assisting him in saving the two or three soldiers who still clung to pieces of ice, I got a musket-ball through my wrist ; for all this time several of the enemy continued deliberately firing at us from the opposite rampart, which was not above sixty yards from the vessel. Not content with what he had already done for me, my kind-hearted friend insisted on helping me out of the

vessel; but I could not consent to his remaining longer exposed to the fire of the enemy, who had already covered the deck with killed and wounded, and M'Dougal fortunately still remained unhurt. Finding that I would not encumber him, he left the vessel, and I went down to the cabin, where I found Lieut. Briggs, of the 91st, sitting on one side, with a severe wound through his shoulder-blade. The floor of the cabin was covered with water, for the vessel had become leaky from the firing. I took my station on the opposite side, and taking off my neckcloth, with the assistance of my teeth, I managed to bind up my wound, so as to stop the bleeding in some measure. My companion suffered so much from his wound that little conversation passed betwixt us.

I fell naturally into gloomy reflections on the events of the night. I need hardly say how bitter and mortifying they were: after all our toils and sanguine anticipations of ultimate success, to be thus robbed of the prize which we already grasped, as we thought, with a firm hand. Absorbed in these melancholy ruminations, accompanied from time to time by a groan from my companion, several hours passed away, during which the water continued rising higher and higher in the cabin, until it reached my middle, and I was obliged

to hold my arm above it, for the salt-water made it smart. Fortunately the vessel grounded from the receding of the tide. Escape in our state being now quite out of the question, my companion and I were glad on the whole to be relieved from our present disagreeable situation by surrendering ourselves prisoners.

The firing had now entirely ceased, and the French seemed satiated with the ample vengeance they had taken on us. As there was no gate near us, we were hoisted with ropes over the ramparts, which were here faced with brick to the top. A French soldier was ordered to show me the way to the hospital in the town. As we proceeded, however, my guide took a fancy to my canteen which still hung by my side, and laying hold of it without ceremony, was proceeding to empty its contents into his own throat. Though suffering with a burning thirst from loss of blood, I did not recollect till this moment that there was about two-thirds of a bottle of gin remaining in it. I immediately snatched it from the fellow's hand and clapping it to my mouth, finished every drop of it at a draught, while he vented his rage in oaths. I found it exceedingly refreshing, but it had no more effect on my nerves than small beer in my present state of exhaustion.

The scene as we passed through the streets, strewed here and there with the bodies of our fallen soldiers, intermixed with those of the enemy, was, indeed, melancholy; even could I have forgotten for a moment how the account stood between the enemy and us, I was continually reminded of our failure, by the bodies of many of our people being already stripped of their upper garments. When we arrived at the hospital, I found one of the officers of my regiment, who had been taken prisoner, standing at the door. My face was so plastered with blood from a prick of a bayonet I had got in the temple from one of our soldiers, that it was some time before he knew me. In passing along the beds in the hospital, the first face I recognised was that of my friend Robertson, whom I had left for dead when our party retreated. Besides the wound he received in the head, he had received one in the wrist, after he fell.

On lying down on the bed prepared for me, I was guilty of a piece of simplicity, which I had ample occasion to repent before I left the place. I took all my clothes off, and sent them to be dried by the people of the hospital, but they were never returned to me. I was in consequence forced to keep my bed for the three days I remained prisoner in Bergen-op-Zoom.

The hospital was crowded with the wounded on both sides. On my right hand lay Ensign Martial of the 55th regiment, with a grape-shot wound in his shoulder, of which, and ague together, he afterwards died at Klundert. On my left, in an adjoining room, lay poor General Skerret, with a desperate wound through the body, of which he died next night. It was said that he might have recovered, had it not been for the bruises he had received from the muskets of the enemy after he fell. This story I can hardly credit. However that may be, there is no doubt we lost in him a most gallant, zealous, and active officer, and at a most unfortunate time for the success of the enterprise. On the opposite side of the hospital lay Capt. Campbell, of the 55th regiment. He had a dreadful wound from a grape which entered at his shoulder and went out near the back-bone. He was gifted with the most extraordinary flow of spirits of any man I have ever met with. He never ceased talking from sun-rise till night, and afforded all of us who were in a condition to relish any thing, an infinite deal of amusement. I had told Campbell of the trick they had played me with my clothes, and it immediately became with him a constant theme for rating every Frenchman that passed him.

In the course of the next day a French serjeant came swaggering into the hospital, with an officer's sash tied round him, and stretched out to its utmost breadth. He boasted that he had killed the officer by whom it had been worn. Twice a-day two of the attendants of the hospital went about with buckets in their hands, one containing small pieces of boiled meat, which was discovered to be horseflesh by the medical people, while another contained a miserable kind of stuff, which they called soup, and a third contained bits of bread. One of the pieces of meat was tossed on each bed with a fork in passing; but the patient had always to make his choice between flesh and bread, and soup and bread, it being thought too much to allow them soup and meat at the same time. I was never so much puzzled in my life as by this alternative. Constantly tormented with thirst, I usually asked for soup, but my hunger, with which I was no less tormented, made me as often repent my choice. While we lay here we were attended by our own surgeons, and had every attention paid to us in this respect that we could desire.

In the mean time arrangements were entered into with Gen. Bizanet, the French commander, for an exchange of prisoners, and in consequence the last of the wounded prisoners were removed

in waggons to Rozendaal, on the third day after we had been taken. On this occasion I was obliged to borrow a pair of trowsers from one of the soldiers, and a coat from my neighbour Martial, of the 55th, who being a tall man and I rather little, it reached half-way down my legs. Altogether I cut rather an odd figure as I started from the hospital. My regimental cap and shoes had, however, escaped the fate of my other habiliments, so, considering circumstances, matters might have been worse. But, one trial to my temper still remained which I did not expect: the old rascal, to whom I delivered my clothes when I sent them to be dried, had the unparalleled impudence to make a demand on me for the hospital shirt, with which, in place of my own wet one, I had been supplied on entering the hospital. I was so provoked at this unconscionable request, that I believe I should have answered him with a box on the ear, but my only available hand was too well employed at the time in supporting my trowsers. There was still another reason for my objecting to his demand: before I was taken prisoner, while lying in the vessel, I had managed to conceal some money which happened to be in my pockets on going to the attack; this I had carefully transferred, with due secre-

cy, to the inferior margin of the hospital shirt in which it was tied with a garter, when we were preparing to leave the place. This treasure, though not large, was of some importance to me, and I determined that nothing short of brute force should deprive me of it. My gentleman, however, pertinaciously urged his claim to the aforesaid garment, and a violent altercation ensued between us, in which I had an opportunity of showing a proficiency in Dutch swearing, that I was not aware of myself till this moment. My friend Campbell came up at last to my assistance, and discharged such a volley of oaths at the old vampire, that he was fairly beaten out of the field, and I carried away the shirt in triumph.

We were marched out of the town by the Breda-gate to Rozendaal, a distance of about fifteen miles, where we arrived the same night. The French soldiers who had fallen in the conflict had all been removed by this time, but, as we proceeded, escorted by the victors, many a ghastly corpse of our countrymen met our half-averted eyes. They had all been more or less stripped of their clothing, and some had only their shirts left for a covering, and were turned on their faces. My heart rose at this humiliating spectacle, nor could I breathe freely

until we reached the open fields beyond the fortifications. All who were unable to march were crowded into the waggons which had been prepared for them, while those who were less disabled straggled along the road the best way they could. As may be supposed, there were no needless competitors for the waggon conveyance, for the roads were rough, and every jolt of the vehicles produced groans of agony from the wretched passengers.

On arriving at Wouw, which I took in my way, I explained my absence from the regiment to the satisfaction of the commanding officer. I soon heard of the fate of poor Bulteel, (2nd Lieutenant 21st Regiment,) who fell during this ill-starred enterprise, by a cannon-ball, which carried off the top of his head. Never was a comrade more sincerely lamented by his messmates than this most amiable young man. His brother, an officer in the Guards, whom he had met only a few days before, fell the same night. The captain of my company, and kind friend, M'Kenzie, had his leg shattered by a shot on the same occasion, and I was informed that he bore the amputation without suffering a groan to escape from him. Four others were more slightly wounded. The dead had all been collected in the church, and a long trench

being dug by the soldiers, they were all next day deposited in the earth without parade, and in silence. In a few days I proceeded to Rozendaal, where, for the present, the prisoners were to remain.

At this place I had more cause than ever to feel grateful for the kindness of my Dutch landladies and landlords; the surgeon who attended me finding it necessary to put me on low diet, and to keep my bed, the sympathy of the good people of the house knew no bounds; not an hour passed but they came to inquire how I was. So disinterested was their unwearied attention, that on leaving them I could not induce them to accept the smallest remuneration. After some time we went to Klundert, where we were to remain until our exchange should be effected.

Before concluding my narrative of the unfortunate attack on Bergen-op-Zoom, the reader may expect some observations relative to the plan of attack, and the causes of its ultimate failure; but it should be remembered, before venturing to give my opinions on the subject, that nothing is more difficult for an individual attached to any one of the different columns which composed the attacking force, than to assign causes for such an unexpected result,

particularly when the communication between them has been interrupted. In a battle in the open field, where every occurrence either takes place under the immediate observation of the General, or is speedily communicated to him, faults can be soon remedied, or at least it may be afterwards determined with some degree of accuracy where they existed. But in a night-attack on a fortified place, the case is very different. As the General of the army cannot be personally present in the attack, any blame which may attach to the undertaking, can only affect him in so far as the original plan is concerned; and if this plan succeeds so far that the place is actually surprised, and the attacking force has effected a lodgment within it, and even been in possession of the greater part of the place, with a force equal to that of the enemy, no candid observer can attribute the failure to any defect in the arrangements of the General. Nothing certainly can be easier than, after the event, to point out certain omissions which, had the General been gifted with the spirit of prophecy, *might possibly*, in the existing state of matters, have led to a happier result; but nothing, in my humble opinion, can be more unfair, or more uncandid, than to blame the unsuccessful commander, when every pos-

sible turn which things might take was not provided against, and while it still remains a doubt how far *the remedies proposed* by such critics would have succeeded in the execution.

According to the plan of operations, as stated in Sir Thomas Graham's dispatch, it was directed that the right column, under Major-General Skerret, and Brig.-General Gore, which entered at the mouth of the harbour, and the left column under Lord Proby, which Major-General Cooke accompanied in person, and which attacked between the Waterport and Antwerp gates, should move along the ramparts and form a junction. This junction, however, did not take place, as General Cooke had been obliged to change the point of attack, which prevented his gaining the ramparts until half-past eleven o'clock, an hour after General Skerret entered with the right column; a large detachment of which, under Colonel the Hon. George Carleton, and General Gore, had, unknown to him, (General Cooke), as it would appear, penetrated along the ramparts far beyond the point where he entered. The centre column, under Lieut.-Colonel Morrice, which had attacked near the Steenberg lines, being repulsed with great loss, and a still longer delay occurring before they entered by the scaling-ladders of General Cooke's column, the enemy

had ample opportunities to concentrate their force, near the points in most danger. However, notwithstanding all these delays and obstructions, we succeeded (as already stated) in establishing a force equal to that of the enemy along the ramparts. But still, without taking into account the advantage which the attacking force always possesses in the alarm and distraction of the enemy, (which, however, was more than counterbalanced by our entire ignorance of the place,) we could not, in fact, be said to have gained any decided superiority over our adversaries; on the contrary, the chances were evidently against our being able to maintain our position through the night, or until reinforcements could come up. "But why," I have heard it often urged, "were we not made better acquainted with the place?" In answer to this question, it may be observed, that though there can be no doubt that the leaders of the different columns, at least, had seen plans of the place, yet there is a great difference between a personal knowledge of a place, and that derived from the best plans, even by daylight; but in the *night* the enemy must possess a most decided advantage over their assailants, in their intimate knowledge of all the communications through the town, as well as in their ac-

quaintance with the bearings of the different works which surround it.

Another circumstance which must have tended most materially to the unfortunate result of the attack was, that the two parties, which had been detached from the right column, were deprived of their commanders in the very beginning of the night, by the fall of Generals Skerret and Gore, and Colonel Carleton. The reader, were I inclined to account for our failure, by these early calamities alone, need not go far to find instances in history where the fate of an army has been decided by the fall of its leader. There are some statements, however, in the excellent account published by Colonel Jones, (who must have had the best means of information on these points), which irresistibly lead the mind to certain conclusions, which, while they tend most directly to exonerate Sir Thomas Graham, as well as the General entrusted with the command of the enterprise, from the blame which has so unfairly been heaped on them, at the same time seem to imply some degree of misconduct on the part of the battalion detached by General Cooke to support the reserve of 600 men under Lt. Col. Muller at the Waterport gate. This battallion, he (Colonel Jones), states, perceiving the enemy preparing to

attack them after having got possession of the Waterport-gate, left the place, by crossing the ice. No reason is given why this battalion did not fall back on General Cooke's force at the Orange bastion.

The surrender of the reserve at the Waterport-gate seems to have arisen either from some mistake, or from ignorance of the practicability of effecting their escape in another direction, for it does not appear that they were aware of General Cooke's situation. The loss of these two parties seems, therefore, to have been the more immediate cause of the failure of the enterprise; for had both these parties been enabled to form a junction with General Cooke, we should still, notwithstanding former losses, have been nearly on an equality, in point of numbers at least with the enemy. As matters now stood, after these two losses, which reduced our force in the place to less than half that of the French, General Cooke appears to have done all that could be expected of a prudent and humane commander, in surrendering to prevent a useless expenditure of life, after withdrawing all he could from the place. It would appear, in consequence of the delay that occurred before General Cooke entered the place, and the repulse of Colonel Morrice's column, that the plan of the attack had been altered; otherwise it is difficult to account for the

proceedings of General Skerret in his attempting to penetrate so far along the ramparts to the left of the entrance of the harbour, with so small a force.

In Sir Thomas Graham's dispatch, (as I have already noticed), it is stated that the right column, under General Skerret, and the left under General Cooke, "were directed to form a junction as soon as possible," and "clear the rampart of opponents." From the latter words it is evident that he meant by the nearest way along the ramparts; consequently, according to this arrangement, General Skerret's column, after entering at the mouth of the harbour, should have proceeded along the ramparts to its right. In this direction, Colonel Carleton had proceeded with 150 men, while General Skerret pushed along the ramparts in the opposite direction; from these circumstances, it is fair to conclude that General Skerret despaired of being able to form a junction with the left column, and therefore wished to force the Steenberg-gate, and admit the 21st Fusiliers, under Colonel Henry, while Colonel Carleton should form a junction with Colonel Jones. It is stated in Col. Jones's account that General Skerret attempted to fall back on the reserve at the Waterport-gate, but was prevented by the rising of the tide at the entrance of the harbour. Though it would be rash at this

distance of time to venture to contradict this statement, I cannot help thinking that he has been misinformed on this point; for, on my joining the party, after opening the Waterport-gate, I heard nothing of such an attempt having been made; and if they had still entertained the idea of retiring from their position, I could have easily shown them the way by the foot-bridge across the harbour, where Colonel Muller had sent a company of the Royals from the Waterport-gate. The party were, when I came to them, at bastion 14,* to which they had just retired from bastion 13, where General Skerret had been wounded and taken prisoner, and they were now commanded by Captain Guthrie of the 33rd Regiment: it was under the orders of the last mentioned officer that we threw up the log parapet, which was of such use to us during the night. The admirable judgment and coolness displayed by this gallant officer, upon whom the command so unexpectedly devolved, cannot be mentioned in too high terms of commendation.

In concluding my narrative, it will, I trust, be admitted, that however much we may deplore

* See the plan at the end of the 2nd vol. of Colonel Jones's Journals of Sieges, &c.

the unfortunate issue of the enterprise, and the unforeseen difficulties which tended to frustrate the best concerted plan of operations, there have been few occasions during the war in which the courage and energies of British soldiers have been put to such a severe test, or have been met by a more gallant and successful resistance on the part of the enemy.

END.

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G. SCHULZE, 13, POLAND STREET.

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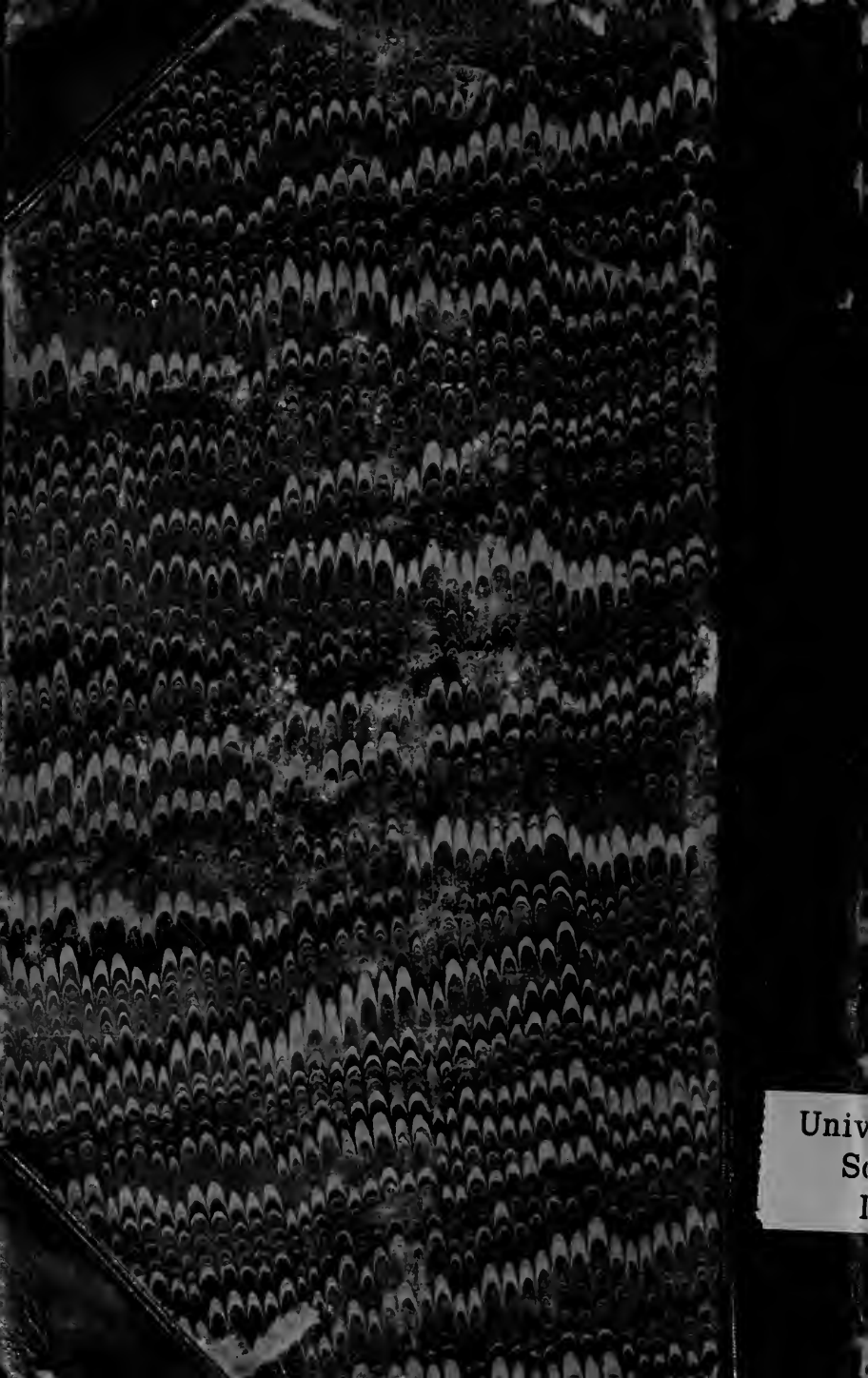
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